



Awaken

the soul & let your spirit fly

A bimonthly publication of Good Shepherd Catholic Church ~ steadfast in awakening our true being in God.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Embracing your "inner pilgrim" for Jubilee 2025



THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity
and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Franciscus

In these early weeks of 2025 and with the Holy Jubilee Year in Church news, a special sense may be lingering among the faithful; *Christ's nativity stirs Christian hope in a way that is meant to last. It is supposed to endure in our hearts.*

Yes, that holy Bethlehem night eloquently reawakens souls to the profound hope of Emmanuel, *God with us*. And the Jubilee message reminds us of what we *know*, but sometimes tend to store away with the ornaments — God *remains* with us.

When Vatican Holy Doors opened on Christmas Eve, and the opening of other Holy Doors around the world followed suit, it commemorated the year ahead as one of forgiveness, conversion and joyful hope. Pilgrims of Hope everywhere trumpeted “a hope that does not fade.”

“I like the idea because I can feel it,” says Good Shepherd Parish pastor Father Michael Vaughan. “This Jubilee has a tone of hope” in a world in desperate need of hope, he shares.

“One in five adults in the U.S. have mental health concerns,” Father Michael says, keenly aware of the effects on individuals and communities suffering in this way. Often medical interventions are necessary. He ruminates on factual and anecdotal information specific to anxiety and depression, but also acedia, that is, spiritual sadness. He notes how “even those in touch with Christ, who encounter him through prayer and sacrament,” can experience the weight of these.

Getting in touch with our “inner pilgrim” nature “resonates with me,” Father Michael exhorts, stressing that perhaps more than anything else, the Jubilee year

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“I always think of Jesus Christ...how he humbled himself to serve and love his disciples,” says Joey Edralin, summoning images of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. “He didn’t come to be served, but to serve,” he recaps, “giving his life as a ransom for our misdoings, our sins.”

“I want to help in whatever way I can,” says Lily, thinking of the Church, the clergy, family and fellow disciples.

Joey and Lily, who have been married for 35 years this June, find meaning in servanthood.

“I think service – *servanthood* – is an aspect of life that promotes a good sense of purpose,” Joey suggests, inferring bountiful, tangible results in the work accomplished, but *also* in many spiritual results.

“When you serve God it inspires others, contributes to the greater good, and follows Jesus’ example,” Joey deduces.

Serving in ministry also “offers peace,” Lily adds aware that her comment can be viewed as contradictory. *How can doing more be calming or peaceful?*

“You feel at peace because you’re doing something you enjoy...you’re learning and growing...you’re sacrificing time for God,” Lily explains.

Accordingly, Joey and Lily have made servanthood the bedrock of their marriage. They always abide by a life of faith and service, committed to raising their three children to do the same and to be “good people.”

As parents committed to living their faith with devotion to Jesus, they see acts of service carried out in ministry as a way to share their gifts and talents, and do good.

“We’re not only meant to *be* good,” Lily maintains, “but to *do* good,” too, as a way to develop in holiness.

When the Edralin family moved to Elk Grove in 2015, they got involved in CFF and, over the years, they added several liturgical ministries, including Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC), Homebound Ministry and Altar Service. They often try to schedule themselves to serve together. Lily serves as the lead for EMHC and participates on the Liturgy Board. She is also a lector and recently trained to serve as a Mass Coordinator. The couple also serves on the Baptism Liturgy team.

“God won’t give us what we can’t handle,” Lily believes, pointing to service as a small gesture of gratitude to God for “all the



Lily and Joey Edralin

gifts he has given us...we are so thankful.”

Joey and Lily view servanthood as an outpouring of love and thanksgiving to God that every disciple must adopt. Yet, percentage-wise, “few respond to the call,” Joey observes.

“Every time I hear about a need or an opportunity to serve in the announcements or the bulletin, I pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance,” Joey says explaining his prayerful dialogue and discernment process to find out whether he can help.

In her ministry work, Lily works to instill a sense of understanding and commitment among those who serve. She hopes to foster community and relationships among participants so that ministry and service invoke a meaningful commitment and responsibility ordered above all else. “I hope it can be fun and that people gain a sense of belonging,” Lily says.

Joey offers two more spiritual results, or “sister” virtues to servanthood: *humility* and *forgiveness*. “Service is the opposite of self-centeredness,” Joey submits, inferring that a natural humility comes when “putting others first.” He also finds that while serving others, “we tend to forgive,” putting aside annoyances, attitudes or offenses.

“Balance your focus with flexibility,” Joey says, suggesting that servanthood blossoms with a sincere openness to serve as Jesus did, whenever, wherever and for whomever.





Soup for the Soul will launch the highly acclaimed series, *The Rescue Project*, as our Lenten feature. Each video segment will be complemented with a simple soup and bread meal, followed by conversation. The Stations of the Cross will follow in the church at 7:00 p.m.

Visit GSCCEG.org to learn more about upcoming events.



ONE LOVE, ONE HOPE! Please save the date, **March 8, 2025** for the **2025 Youth & Young Adult Music, Art, and Poetry Contest** and prepare to be wowed!

There is great talent among us! Calling all youth and young adults throughout the Sacramento diocesan region to share your God-given talents with your community in this 2nd talent showcase! Encourage one another TODAY to register and let your artistry shine! Fabulous prizes!



Ages 11-29 are invited to scan the QR code to register. For more information, visit the parish website or email:

valerie.ramos@comcast.net
rpanama3@yahoo.com

Sponsored by the St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry



THE RESCUE PROJECT IS LIFE-CHANGING! This powerful video series offers "a compelling proclamation of the Gospel... a way of seeing reality...and of making sense of the world, history and life that is vastly different from the story our modern culture tells."

Don't miss this! **Join together Fridays during Lent** at 5:30 p.m. in the Father Philip Wells Hall (except Good Friday on April 18). Series concludes in May 2. There will be a light meal and riveting conversation.

JESUS' MISSION IS A RESCUE.

Ash Wednesday is **March 5, 2025**



Good Shepherd Catholic Church's **28th Annual Crab Feed!** *Mardi Gras*

Save the Date! Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. is set for **Good Shepherd's 28th Annual Crab Feed!** With a Mardi Gras theme, this event is destined to deliver not only a delicious crab dinner but all the favorite traditions we have come to know and love on this occasion — raffle, silent and live auctions, and a DJ assuring music and fun at all times. True, it is not actually "Fat Tuesday" but *Samedi* (Saturday) *Gras* just doesn't have the same ring.

If you have attended before, you know well that this event is not to be missed. If you have not, then this may be **your** year to experience the transformation of the Father Philip Wells Hall into a crab feast!

Tickets go on sale January 11/12, 2025 after all Masses. This crab feed always

sells out quickly so be ready! Tickets are \$75 each and include an amazing crab dinner with sides and complements. Beer, wine and soft drinks will be available for purchase at this adult-only event (21+ only, please).

This fundraiser/ friend-raiser benefits Good Shepherd Parish's ministries, helping the parish to serve and radiate as a "beacon of light" throughout Elk Grove. Watch the parish bulletin and website for more details.



(Continues here from page 1)

and the “pilgrims of hope” message invite an examination of the woundedness that occurs within every human being.

“We have to recognize and find our wounds because they will condition our ‘present,’” Father Michael urges, suggesting that “unless there is healing, you’re robbed of joy.”

Joyless Christians represent a lamentable predicament. Every Sunday following the Lord’s Prayer, the priest prays, *“Deliver us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy, keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

Joyful hope is not intended to be an oxymoron or a woeful contradiction. It is a prayer that recognizes Christ – *experienced here and now* – coming into our hearts, and Christ coming at the end of time with the promise of salvation.

Father Michael quotes St. Peter, “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.” (1 Peter 3:15)

This Biblical wisdom offers a starting point toward sanctifying Christ in the heart. The inner pilgrim welcomes the personal journey to reclaim the God-given hope infused at baptism. The inner pilgrim accompanies others, too, in their search for meaning and a renewed sense of the transcendent.

Christian hope is the expectation of something that has already been fulfilled: the door is there, and I hope to reach the door. What do I have to do? Walk toward the door.

Pope Francis

A purposeful journey toward transformation

healing & hope

“Not every parish will celebrate Jubilee in the same way,” Father Michael explains indicating that each may continue to incorporate some of the familiar initiatives and messages already underway such as *Eucharistic Revival*, *Walk with One* and *Radiate Love*.

“Our framework – our mark – continues to be Missionary Discipleship,” Father Michael affirms. The key terms of **ENCOUNTER**, **ACCOMPANY**, **COMMUNITY** and **SEND** never go away. Instead, they provide the lens through which to view the Jubilee.

As missionary disciples, we sharpen our focus on **encountering** Christ and his love for us.

“We spend time with Christ,” Father Michael says, to find the light again. The evil one wants nothing more than to hold people in darkness and “some are stuck... they need help,” he expresses, concerned for those locked in a dark place.

“We are all wounded, wearing masks and hoping no one will see,” Father Michael intimates, commenting that “people don’t want to admit” their woundedness and they don’t want to be vulnerable.

“We have to look for those who seem sad,” Father Michael says, pointing to an-

other aspect of missionary discipleship – **accompaniment**.

“We have to stop and listen,” Father Michael implores because hope depends on it.

He turns to an age old quote believed to have originated with St. Augustine. “The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints,” he says granting the more current rephrasing by Pope Francis who compares the church to a “field hospital.” In that field hospital, wounds can be healed and hope can be restored.

That field hospital is often the parish **community** where pilgrims of hope grow in their relationship with Jesus, grow in love for neighbor, and experience renewal in the sacraments.

“Father Henri Nouwen wrote about finding joy in our wounds,” Father Michael asserts bringing that once-evasive idea of “joyful hope” to mind again. He describes how the wounded individuals who experience healing and mercy become transformed by God’s grace. They sense a new capacity as “wounded healers” to go out – to be **sent** – sharing *both* joy and Christian hope.

This is the transformation possible in this Jubilee year. It is a pilgrimage of the heart.

Pilgrims of hope cross thresholds of...

- Prayer
- Sunday Mass
- Holy sites
- The confessional
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- Small groups
- Healing
- Hope



PILGRIMAGES

Many pilgrims will travel to Rome, making pilgrimages to the Vatican and passing over the threshold of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. Likewise, pilgrimages to Papal Basilicas in Rome and minor basilicas around the world, and other recognized pilgrimage sites can inspire a deeply transformative Jubilee year.

In the Diocese of Sacramento, **12 designated parishes will host pilgrims** who journey to these sites to pray and experience an intentional desire for forgiveness and conversion in solidarity with pilgrims around the world.

...we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to hold fast to the hope that lies before. This we have as an anchor of the soul... *Hebrews 6:18-19*

RECONCILIATION

24 Hours for the Lord takes place on March 28/29 in every deanery to give the faithful time for confession, offered around the clock on that Lenten day. Please watch for more details on 24 Hours for the Lord in coming weeks. Beyond this day, Catholics are encouraged to receive the sacrament of reconciliation regularly to heal the wounds of sin and foster hope for eternity.

Living Jubilee intentionally

Local offerings lead to spiritual renewal, God's grace

"To come to be what you are not, you must go by a way in which you are not."

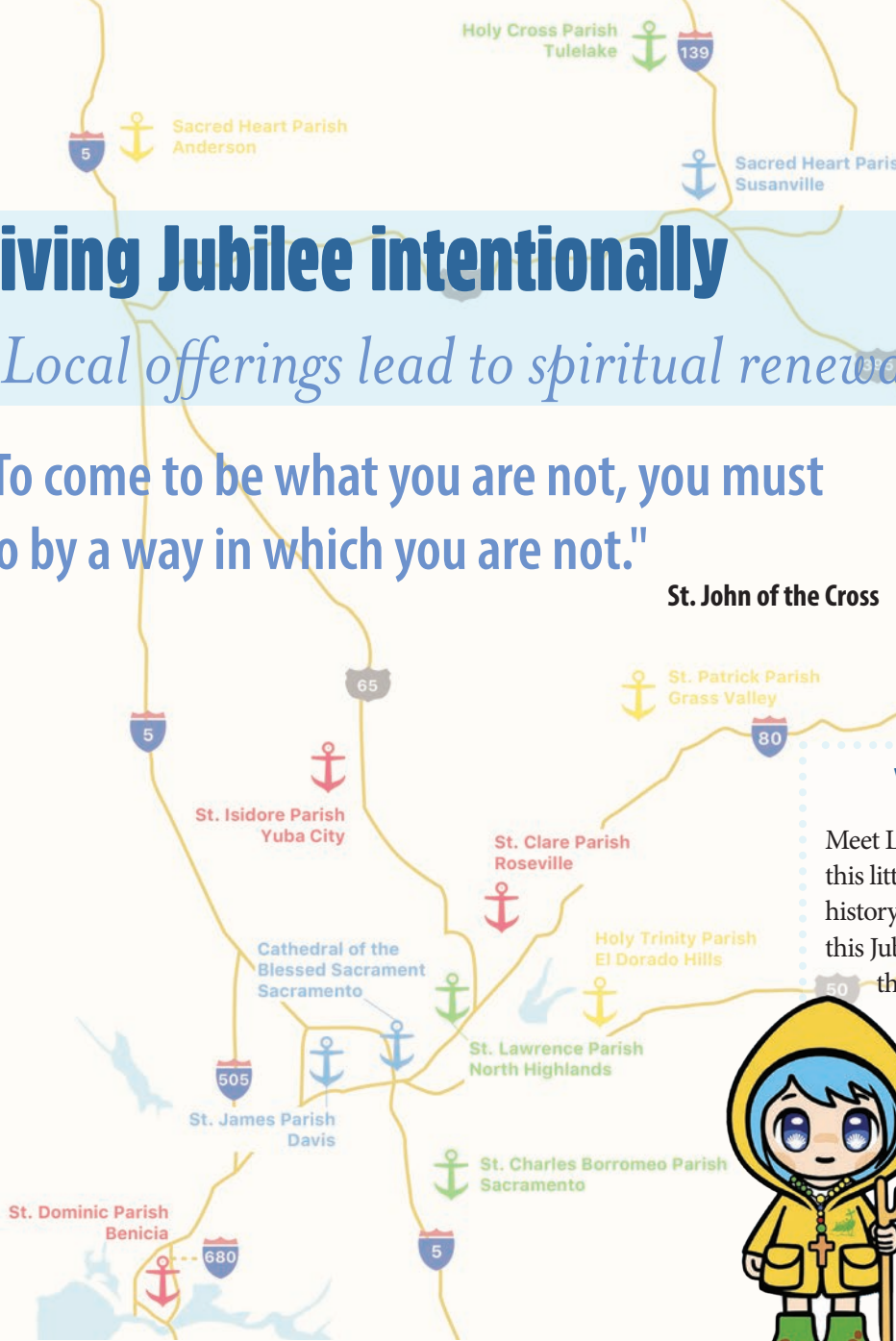
St. John of the Cross

The diocese plans to host additional **Jubilee events** throughout the year to elevate a sensibility of hope and encourage spiritual transformation. **Resource materials and updates** can be found on the diocesan website (SCD.org/jubilee2025).

You may see Luce around!

Meet Luce (loo-chay)! Packed with symbolism, this little mascot is the first-ever in Vatican history intended to reach out to youth during this Jubilee year. Her name means, "light" and this little pilgrim will journey along with the world, evangelizing in the spirit of hope and inspiring young people to find purpose and meaning in "hope that does not disappoint."

"Luce's purpose as a pilgrim is to seek a deepened relationship with Jesus, and to point us in the direction of Him in the process," according to Catholic writer Alexis Grace.



HERE I AM
Lord
SEND ME
ISAIAH 6:8

PARISH WOMEN LAUNCH, LEAD
18 groups gather weekly to study,

walking with purpose

SO MUCH MORE THAN A BIBLE STUDY

It was winter 2022. Good Shepherd Parish women were still “aglow” following the Advent by Candlelight event. It was a beautiful evening with more than 300 women in attendance – like all the preceding years.

Donna Gutierrez remembers what happened next. “Our pastor, Father Michael, soon asked, ‘*What do we do afterward?*’” she says, echoing his compelling question and quickly seeing his point. *How do we stay in touch, reach out and continue to nourish their souls?*

That’s when the Holy Spirit connected all the dots and led the parish to Catholic author/speaker Lisa Brenninkmeyer. Her [Walking with Purpose Bible studies](#), complementary website content and podcasts encourage women to break open the Word in small group gatherings.

“We ordered Lisa’s book, *Walking with Purpose, Seven Priorities that Make Life Work*, and had a great response in our attempt,” Donna explains of the “trial run.” With fellow coordinator Julie Danielson, the duo launched several small groups. Participants read the

chapters and came together to discuss them. The receptivity was positive and “it led us to the bigger picture,” Donna says of the *Walking With Purpose* Bible study, “*Open Your Heart*.”

More than a Bible Study

“We love this program,” Julie stresses, describing how it is more than a Bible study. “It gives every woman the tools they need to focus on Jesus and his Word,” Julie says, distinguishing how the program “raises your level of awareness” on the importance of knowing *about* Jesus but also “*knowing Jesus* through his Word...the Bible.”

Donna agrees about the content. “It has us ponder and go deeper,” she says of the weekly lessons which inspire scripture study with questions and meditations, reinforcing discussion with the wisdom and experiences of saints.

Julie and Donna see hearts opened and renewed through the study, the fellowship, the sharing and learning with others, and being present to each other every week in small groups.

“Women are eager to learn from each other and to share their pains and joys of life,” Donna adds “and this is the Holy Spirit at work.”

The *Open Your Heart* study is one of more than a dozen future studies available. Options exist to select other themed studies to keep growing and learning in Christ.

Small group gatherings

Launching last fall, Good Shepherd has nearly 160 women participating in 18 small groups. Women choose

from meeting times and locations offered by the small group leaders. Most meet in homes, while a few meet on the parish campus. Some groups meet in the morning while others convene later in the afternoon or evening.

“The sharing that takes place in these small groups is lifting everyone and bringing them closer to Christ,” Julie says, emphasizing that although women are at different points in their respective spiritual lives, the Holy Spirit pours out grace enriching and illumi-



Ministry leads: Julie Danielson & Donna Gutierrez

To all parish women: **JOIN US FOR UPCOMING**

CONNECT COFFEE GATHERINGS!

▪ **SAT. JAN. 11**

▪ **SAT. JAN. 25**

9-11 A.M. IN THE PARISH HALL

SMALL-GROUP BIBLE STUDIES

learn and love Jesus and his Word!

nating every participant's faith journey.

"We love hearing how these women's prayer lives have changed, how their love for the Bible has changed, and of their awareness that we have a living and true God who loves us as we are," Julie underscores.

Send me!

"The Holy Spirit has been working," Julie insists, in ways innumerable. "He has led women who would have never sought to be facilitators of small groups," Julie says

noting that 23 women serve as leaders or co-leaders, hosting the small group gatherings.

"He has shown that all women have so many gifts" and that every unique gift enhances God's kingdom. Quoting Lisa Brenninkmeyer paraphrasing St. Joan of Arc, "We were born for this," Julie proclaims.

Julie and Donna hint at the natural fit *Walking with Purpose* Bible studies have with the parish's missionary discipleship focus. Small group leaders heard the call, stepped up and responded with a loud,

"Send Me"! Participants see how Jesus calls and sends *everyone* in their daily lives, too.

"Connect Coffee" events

"Once a month, we gather as a community," Donna mentions noting the open invitation to *all* parish women to come and see what it is all about. There is a stirring in the air, *naturally*, as women from all 18 groups gather on the Good Shepherd campus to enjoy a cup of coffee and honor the love and growth occurring among them. An excitement to also greet new women who are

interested in joining a small group bible study prevails.

"We connect with each other and listen to Lisa," Donna continues, detailing an important touchpoint with founder Lisa Brenninkmeyer, who delivers a 30-minute video lesson to attendees. Her message aligns with the *Open Your Heart* book and prompts interaction and relationship. There is table discussion and sharing.

"There is much fruit, *definitely*," Donna says. She applauds the "open door" nature of *Walking with Purpose*, which

invites women to join at any time.

The program meets women where they are. There is always an open seat.

"I see the conversions taking place in leaders and individuals," Donna confides, sensing a desire among participants to witness their Catholic faith in new and powerful ways... *inspired by the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Word.*



Small group leaders: Back row left to right – Alice Gore, Mary Palmer, Ifeoma Okeke, Michelle Hayes, Donna Gutierrez; Middle row left to right – Lynette Magnino, Karin Danielson, Jackie Slakey, Valerie Ramos, Leticia Medrano, Sarah Brilz, Carmen Ramirez, Angela Pinocchio, Amelina Mendoza; Front row left to right – Sylvia Guido, Diane Marcotte, Grace Garcia, Rose Marcelino, Arlyn Desiderio, Xiomara Balladares, Julie Danielson, Maria Gamez; **Not pictured:** Monica Small, Menchie Cabrera, Theresa Vina, Ninfa Campomanes, Monica Alvarez, Heather McAvoy-Jensen, Julie Herndon and Kim Morgan.



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 Pastor: Rev. Michael Vaughan

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Awaken **THE SOUL**
Practice the faith ...
Breanna Silvestre crafts rosaries with love

Mom Hopie sees her encouraging others in prayer and devotion

Breanna came up to me with a rosary and said, 'Look what I made,' Hopie Silvestre says of that day back in 2021 when her daughter first

shared her gift for making rosaries. "I was shocked," Hopie adds, unsure of how exactly her daughter translated her beading talents into holy items.

pass them out and give them away," Hopie continues, still moved daily by her daughter's generous nature. "She gives from the heart," Hopie says, noting Breanna "just loves to make rosaries as often as five times a week."

Hopie describes Breanna as very attentive, if not critical, of her work. She counts the beads carefully and creates rosary decades succinctly and specifically. "She makes sure she double-checks her work," Hopie says.

"I know in my heart that the Blessed Mother has graced her to do this," Hopie conveys, referring to Breanna's connection, deep devotion and love for Mary, which has only increased since she received her sacraments three years ago.

Hopie and Breanna give the rosaries and bracelets to friends and family. Hopie appreciates the opportunity to distribute Breanna's handiwork when she can, giving them to the homeless, CFF students, grieving families at funerals, and brothers and sisters in Christ. They even have been requested and mailed to prayerful hearts overseas!

Hopie recounts how many have shared their "sense of calmness and peace" when praying with Breanna's rosaries. Many wrap the beads around the wrist, holding it close as they fall to sleep and rest in the Lord. Breanna's Godmother, Sylvia Guido, expressed, "She taught me so much by sharing her great devotion and beautiful love for our Blessed Mother of Jesus. She's been brought into many of our lives to remind us that we must have the faith of a child and we need to have the virtues of simplicity and purity of heart like her."

"We call her 'our angel' in my family," Hopie discloses, feeling sure that God selected her to be Breanna's mother. "It inspires me," she says, reflecting on the challenges and blessings in their lives.

A longtime parishioner, mother of six and grandmother of four who all received their sacraments at Good Shepherd, Hopie believes Breanna led her to a transition in her faith life years ago. "Becoming closer to God... you have that choice," Hopie asserts, grateful to God for their journey. "He is faithful."

"She is my miracle child," Hopie explains, citing Breanna's 28 years of ongoing health challenges. Now, the words, "miracle child" have a new meaning.

Breanna grew up knowing about the rosary and knows the prayers, Hopie clarifies. It was Breanna's unexpected ability of making rosaries that surprised her that day. Hopie learned from Breanna that she had been staring at her rosaries, took one, and attempted to make it.

"She copied it and made her first rosary," Hopie reports marveling at her work and enduring commitment. "She wanted to continue to make them and hasn't stopped," Hopie says.

"She just kept coming up with all these rosaries and different styles, and she wants to



Top: Breanna on her First Holy Communion. Bottom: Breanna and Hopie at the Knights of Columbus Craft Fair last November.