

# THE CHAPEL (cont.)

Continued from Page 6

our seventh through 12th graders,” Cushing said. “We’ve repainted and done some redesign of the rooms back there to accommodate our move into Chapel Kids/Chapel Students.

He added, “That’s been growing.”

“It’s nice to reach families. When they come on a Sunday, we can say, ‘Hey, we’ve got something for your kids, as well, during the week.’ That’s really encouraging.”

On the other side, “our community partner side, we call our partner space. We’ve had some great traction,” Cushing explained. “We have a number of community partners” including People Inc., Habitat for Humanity and Prince of Peace Church Buffalo.

“Pastor Gabriel is the pastor there in Buffalo. They’ve opened up a second campus, and the second campus is actually at our Niagara Falls campus,” Cushing said. “They meet on Sundays at 1:30, and they’re a bilingual service: Spanish and English. They also meet during the week. On Thursday nights, they have Bible studies, and they use one of the partner rooms in the middle school area.”

•FOOTBALL FIELD

The Chapel has teamed with local baseball, football, softball and cheerleading squads to enable activities on the grounds.

“It is a great field,” Cushing said.

•GARDEN

The Chapel is feeding more than 20 families, in part, through a new garden area just outside the breezeway. Food donations are also collected in the worship center hallway.

FUTURE PHASES:

•MAIN CLASSROOM WING

“The main classroom wing is storage for a number of our campuses right now, and for some ministries that just need some storage space for different materials they have,” Cushing said.

Rehabilitation of this portion of the building would likely be part of a final phase of renovation.

“We’re just praying and exploring, as people want to talk to us about different things, whether that be in housing or whatever that looks like, just kind of different developers that come through and they’ve got ideas,” Cushing said. “We’re listening to things and just seeing what kind of aligns with the mission that we’re on, and who we can partner with comfortably with something like that.”

•MAIN HALLWAY/FORMER FRONT OFFICE AND CHAPEL AREA

“That space, we’ve done some foundational work, which is like put in drywall and sprinklers,” Cushing said. “We were initially thinking we were going to have



Above: The former Niagara Catholic High School cafeteria was converted into a worship center. • Left: A peek into one of the Chapel Students rooms inside the former St. Dominic Savio building.



a chapel space there, but we’ve probably moved away from that, into potentially partnership with local organizations that might need a space for something. We’ve looked at opportunities for medical to potentially come in there. We’ve talked to a number of organizations about that; or it could be education; it could be any number of things that we would partner with somebody.”

•GYMNASIUM

The congregation’s growth has prompted Chapel leadership to consider converting the former gymnasium into a larger worship space.

“We had to shut down in COVID, because we were (renting space inside the Regal Cinema) and the Regal shut down,” Cushing explained. “But coming out of COVID and moving into our space, we’ve only seen growth. That’s been super-encouraging. A lot of churches have struggled, and we’ve been really blessed with our new facility, just to see the numbers keep going. And not that it’s all about numbers – it’s not – but our community of believers is growing as a family, too.”

Right now, “Excitingly, at our campus, we are experiencing a pressure point of just growth,” Cushing said. “Christmas Eve services, we were pretty close to 550 in our facility – that’s including kids and adults. We had three services of almost 160 people in each service, adults. And so, we

are at the pressure point where we need to really be thinking about our gymnasium space, and what we’re going to do in that space.”

However, he emphasized, “There are no definite plans at this point.”

Cushing said, “We’re definitely thinking about how we can accommodate more people. ... But, “We continue to pray as to how God is going to allow us to use this space for his glory.”

“We’re not done doing things. What I mean by that is it’s not just the building. We want to figure out the best way to partner with the community, but also just to reach people with the saving knowledge of Jesus. We’re constantly thinking about things like that. It’s a challenge at times, but it’s great. It’s so rewarding seeing lives changed.”

•See more photos online at [www.wnypapers.com](http://www.wnypapers.com).

## Franciscan Sisters celebrate 150 years of service in US

Press Release

The Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, located at Stella Niagara near Lewiston, are celebrating 150 years of ministry in the U.S.

On June 5, 1874, four sisters arrived in New York from their province in Germany to teach German immigrants at St. Ann and St. Michael Parishes in Buffalo.

Since that time, the sisters have served in various capacities throughout the U.S., including the establishment of schools, orphanages, hospitals, food banks and homeless shelters, refugee assistance and service to the marginalized.

Notably in Western New York, the sisters currently sponsor Buffalo Academy of the Sacred

Heart, Stella Niagara Education Park, Francis Center’s women’s respite and children’s programs, and the Center of Renewal at Stella Niagara.

The Franciscan Sisters at Stella Niagara invite the public, friends and benefactors to join a Mass of celebration at 10 a.m. Aug. 4 at the chapel in the motherhouse. A reception, with tours of the campus, will follow. Additionally, a short film produced by Sister Diane Gianadda, titled “Leonarda’s Journey,” will be shown to those who wish to learn more about the founding sisters. Space is limited; registration is required by calling the advancement office at 716-754-2193.

Stella Niagara is located at 4421 Lower River Road and online at [www.stellaosf.org](http://www.stellaosf.org).

## Old Fort Niagara hosts ‘Sounds of the Citadel’

Old Fort Niagara Press Release

On Saturday, Aug. 3, from 7-9 p.m., Old Fort Niagara will present an evening of musical entertainment with concerts by two popular bands: The Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps and the Mackenzie Highlanders.

The Plymouth Fife and Drum Corps consists of students, ranging in age from 12-18, who are dedicated to preserving the ancient arts of color guard, fife and drumming through live performances at parades, historical and patriotic celebrations, concerts, cultural affairs, and other civic events. Each year, the corps performs at numerous forts, musters and historical sites throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

For more than 75 years, the Mackenzie Highlanders have been performing throughout

the Niagara Frontier. Based in Youngstown, the Mackenzies regale the audience with Celtic favorites. The band participates in 15 to 20 performances a year and wears modern Mackenzie kilts and the Stag’s Head badge to commemorate the Seaforth Highlanders.

Tickets for the program are the general admission to Old Fort Niagara. Tickets purchased earlier in the day on Aug. 3 will be honored for the performance. Members of the Old Fort Niagara Association are admitted free.

For more information, visit [www.oldfortniagara.org](http://www.oldfortniagara.org).

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