

# SAINT CLARE PARISH PROFILE

## THERESA REYNDERS



Listening to Theresa Reynders play the organ, it's as if she has been making music here at St. Clare Parish her entire life.

As it turns out, that's pretty much the case.

Theresa, who grew up across the street from St. Paul Church in Wrightstown, has been playing piano and organ at St. Clare Parish ever since she first provided musical accompaniment for weekly school Masses as a fifth-grade student more than 40 years ago.

"This whole place is like home to me — it always has been," said Theresa, who still plays the organ at school Masses. "I know all the ins and outs of (St. Paul Church). The church, the parish, they're like my second family."

Theresa is nearing her two-year anniversary as Coordinator of Music and Liturgy for St. Clare Parish.

Her responsibilities for all three church sites include planning Masses; selecting music;

organizing choir practices; aligning schedules for ushers, servers, lectors and sacristans; keeping inventory; ordering items; and much more.

“For the three sites it can get pretty crazy, but I love it,” said Theresa, who also serves as the main organist for all three sites, in addition to playing for weddings and funerals. “Truly, I really love what I do. I love coming to work every single day.”

Theresa’s parish roots run deep — dating back to her baptism at St. Paul Church.

Because Theresa lived across the street from St. Paul and her grandparents Matilda and Elzear Klister frequently were there cleaning it from top to bottom, “I was always over there too,” she said. “I kind of grew up in the church because (Theresa and her two siblings) were always with them.”

Theresa’s family, under the guidance of parents Gary and Myrna Ebert, religiously attended church functions throughout her upbringing. Her uncle was the late Msgr. Roy Klister.

Theresa began taking piano lessons from Mrs. Roebke in second grade, and three years later she found herself playing a small organ at the front of church during Masses for St. Paul School (now called St. Clare School).

“I don’t think I was nervous because I was always in that church anyway,” she said. “I felt right at home.”

While attending Wrightstown High School, Theresa played organ for the girls’ choir.

“That’s when I started playing on the big organ upstairs (at St. Paul),” she said. “I hadn’t had any organ lessons, so that was a little challenging going from piano to the big organ.”

During her high school years, Theresa often walked to church to practice piano.

“Grandpa would come and sit and read the newspaper while I practiced,” she said. “And I think the reason I kept doing it was for (her grandparents). It meant so much to them that I played piano, and I enjoyed that. They were always telling me how proud they were and how happy they were.”

“And I’ve kept playing piano because I still really like it.”

Theresa continued playing piano and organ after high school, and in 1987 she married Mike Reynders at St. Paul Church.

The couple has three adult daughters: Anna, Rachel and Erin. When her children were students at St. Mary School, Theresa worked as the school cook in addition to helping on the farm where she and Mike still live in Greenleaf.

Theresa said her role as Coordinator of Music and Liturgy is near and dear to her heart.

“I like to add to what people get out of Mass through the music — that’s really important to me,” she said.

Theresa also “loves” choir practice, saying, “I like teaching them new things. Like if they can get the alto down with the descant, I’m all excited. Just ask them, they’ll tell you.”

One of Theresa’s favorite songs is “Bread of Angels.”

“That song reminds me of grandma and grandpa,” she said. “For their 50th anniversary, they wanted to hear that song so I played it, and a friend of theirs sang it, and it was so neat.”