

O R C H A R D L A K E S C H O O L S

# CAMPUS COMMUNICATOR

ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER ♦ ST. MARY'S PREPARATORY ♦ POLISH INSTITUTE OF CULTURE & RESEARCH

*"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." ~ John 15:11*

## JANUARY 2026





# DIFFERENCE MAKERS

## Chancellor's Senate Recognition Dinner Honors Members

On behalf of the Orchard Lake Schools, we extend our gratitude to all current and new members of the Chancellor's Senate! Your unwavering support makes the difference in helping us envision how we move forward in our 141-year history of faith, education, culture and tradition, shaping our legacy for generations to come.

This year's Chancellor's Senate Recognition Dinner at Pine Lake Country Club celebrated these members and showcased the winner of OLSM's Annual Christmas Card Contest — Alana Namy — who created this amazing art entry (see photo this page) filled with the stars that shine over the Orchard Lake Schools and continue to bring great joy today and every day.

Special thanks to our Prep student ambassadors for sharing their St. Mary's stories, experiences that help exemplify the impact of the Chancellor's Senate efforts past, present and future.



If you would like to join the Chancellor's Senate of difference makers, future thinkers, and community builders that help us move ever forward, contact Lisa Gray at **(248) 392-9974** or **[lgray@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:lgray@orchardlakeschools.com)**



### ON THE COVER

The Annual Chancellor's Senate Recognition Dinner is a time-honored tradition that expresses our tremendous gratitude for our new and renewing senate members. Their gifts help fulfill the day-to-day needs throughout our campus, those that enable the Orchard Lake Schools to thrive today and for generations to come.



## ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR'S SENATE Supporting the **HEART** of Orchard Lake

### Thank you to our 2025 Chancellor's Senate Members

We are deeply grateful to the generous donors of the Orchard Lake Schools Chancellor's Senate. Through your annual commitment - whether as a new member or a renewing supporter - your gifts provide essential funding for the day-to-day needs of our campus. Your continued generosity strengthens our mission and ensures that the Orchard Lake Schools can thrive today and into the future. Thank you for your unwavering support and to all of you who make the Orchard Lake Schools such a transformational place.

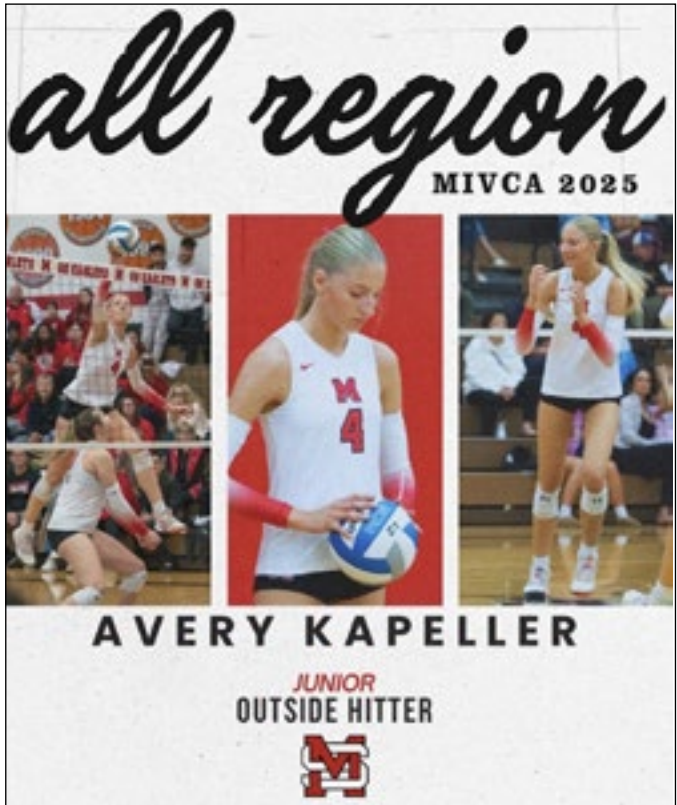
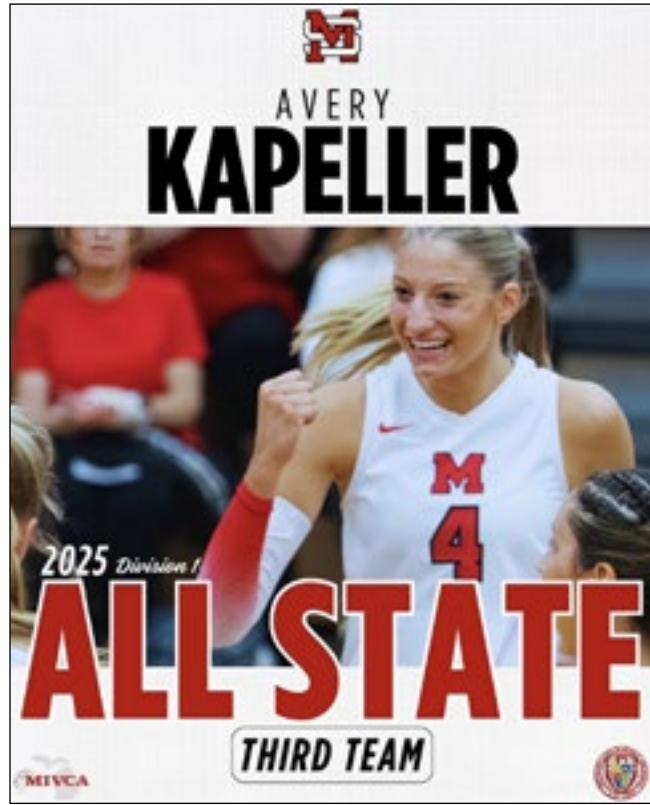
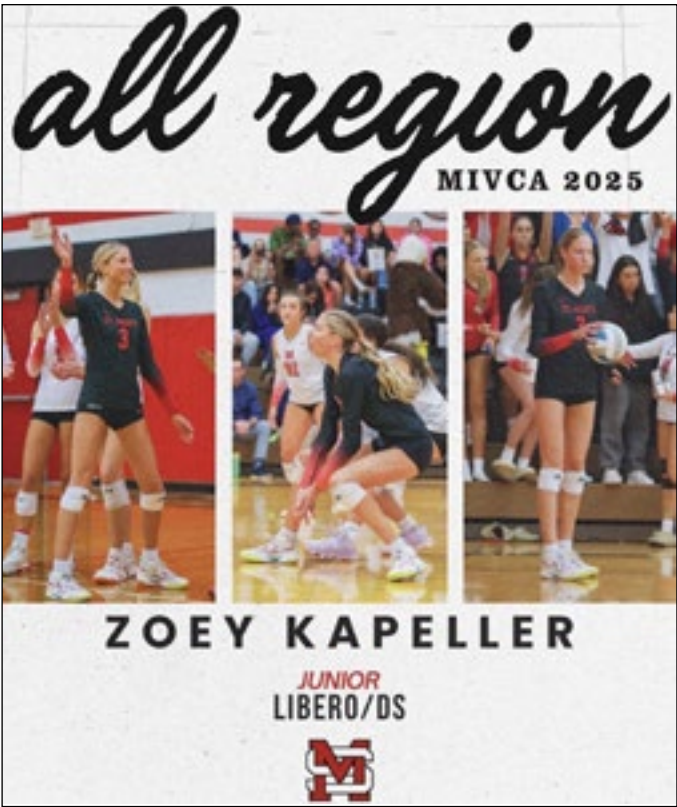
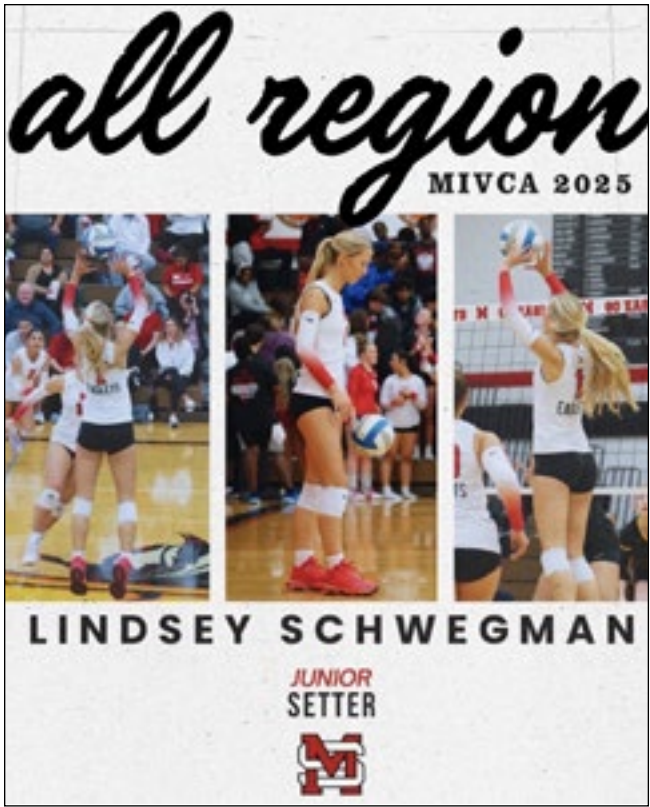


Cover Photo & Chancellor's Senate Photos by  
Tara Johnson | Art Teacher | OLSM



# Michigan Volleyball Coaches Association Honors

Congratulations to OLSM volleyball athletes who earned the following: Avery Kapeller on being named 2025 MIVCA Division 1 Third Team All State this season. MIVCA 2025 All Region – Avery Kapeller (Jr, Outside Hitter), Zoey Kapeller (Jr, Libero/DS), Lindsey Schwegman (Jr, Setter).



# Winter Sports

## Off to a Swift Start!

Don't miss any of the winter sports season action! Visit [www.olsmsports.com/winter-sports.html](http://www.olsmsports.com/winter-sports.html) for more information on all winter sports teams, including schedules, and the latest stats!



## 2025 MHSFCA Awards – Division 2

Congratulations to the following athletes on their MHSFCA All-State football honors:



## 2025 MLive Catholic League Dream Team

1st Team Offense: Lorenzo Barber (ATH), Jabin Gonzales (QB);  
1st Team Defense: Treighjan Gibson (DL), Ryan Harrington (DE), Luke Jackson (LB), Camari Patterson (DB).





5th Annual **MEALS on WHEELS**

During the giving season, OLSM Earth & Science Club students, faculty advisor Ethan Graham, and a group of dedicated parent volunteers focused their holiday efforts on helping homebound seniors in our surrounding area stay warm and cozy this winter! “Delivering meals to elderly members of our community was incredibly fulfilling and reminded us how meaningful kind acts can be during the holiday seasons,” said OLSM student Claire Beltz.

While delivering meals is an important part of the experience, the heart of the day lies in face-to-face interactions with community members — especially elderly residents who may experience loneliness and isolation. Through simple conversations, kindness, and presence, students lived out OLSM’s mission by putting faith into action, demonstrating leadership through service, and strengthening the bonds between the school and the wider community.

***Our family has been delivering meals on wheels since I was a little girl, and the experience is more meaningful the older I get. Italian shows me that small actions can have a big impact. It made me proud to be part of a school that values service, leadership, and taking care of our community.”***  
- EVA D’AGOSTINO



**60+ St. Mary’s Students &  
40+ Family Members Delivered  
300+ Blizzard Boxes & Cozy Socks  
to Local Homebound Seniors**

*Student Leaders:* Claire Beltz, Nola Ceccol, Sam Blair, Eva D’Agostino, Kaylie Bordinat, Thad Raynish  
*Parent Supervisors:* Sarah & Fred D’Agostino



On behalf of the Orchard Lake Schools, we wish to thank the following sponsors, donors, and volunteers for helping to make Jingle All the Way so magical for all those who shared in this time-honored tradition!

**Sponsors**

- Saroki Family  
Varsity Auto Group  
Helen Zakrzewski  
Barbara Szymanski in Memory of Walter Szymanski  
Amy Marie-Sheposh Washington  
Betty Zielinski  
Betsy Ross of Lincoln  
Robin Goddard  
Daana & Ryan Ignasiak  
Commerce Chiropractic - Richard Sadowski  
Jayson Zebari  
Spike Lawrence  
Mark Megge  
Stephen & Maureen Gross  
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WRM Consulting - Machek Family  
Dr. Stanley Majewski  
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- Juleece Swigart in Memory of Martha Copenhaver & James Mitte  
Ken Smerecki  
Nicole & Ken Smerecki  
Lisa Gray in Memory of Doug Hawkins & Greg Donald  
Blue Chip Talent - Pawczuk Family  
Daniel Piccirilli  
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Joe Zielinski  
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David & Jennifer Bauss  
Moms & Dads Club  
Don & Jenna Ogle  
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Michigan Orthodontics - Dr. Jamie Reynolds  
Mandziuk & Son Funeral Directories  
Loretta Orzech  
Kamal Deddeh  
Mark Herrmann  
Bloomfield Construction - Jeff Petrucci





A Night of Light, Legacy, and Reunion:

Brings ALUMNI HOME Again

BY ROBERT MAZUR  
ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICER



On November 23, the Orchard Lake Schools campus glowed brighter than ever — lit not only by the brilliant Christmas tree standing proudly at the heart of campus, but by the joy of alumni returning home with their families. This year’s Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony became far more than a festive tradition. It became a reunion of generations, a celebration of shared memories, and a reminder of the deep, lasting roots that bind St. Mary’s alumni to their alma mater.

As the lights flickered on and the crowd fell into a quiet moment of wonder, one thing became beautifully clear: our alumni continue to carry the spirit of St. Mary’s with them, and they are now passing that spirit on to their children. Watching graduates of decades past walk hand-in-hand with their sons and daughters — introducing them to the place where their own stories began — was both sentimental and profoundly meaningful.

The presence of so many alumni families truly touched the heart of our school. For many, it was their first time back on campus in years. For others, it was a yearly tradition they were proud to continue. Some pointed out the chapel where they once prayed before exams. Others shared stories about snowfall during their student days or introduced their children to former coaches and teachers. The Christmas Tree Lighting reminded us that St. Mary’s is not just a school; it is a community built on faith, tradition, and generations of families who believe in its mission. This night of light and love reaffirmed that our community continues to flourish — rooted in tradition, strengthened by its people, and illuminated by the shared hope that every Christmas Tree Lighting brings.



Coach Sterling Mintzer (P’97)



We’re excited to share that alumnus Sterling Mintzer has returned to his alma mater as the head coach of the OLSM boys’ freshman basketball team of which his son, Austin is rostered! Austin’s twin sister Layla is a freshman girls basketball team athlete. While an OLSM student,

Sterling played basketball for coaches Len Karschnia and Denny Butcher. He also played OLSM football and baseball. Sterling and his family reside in Commerce Twp. He is the owner of Mintzer Building Co., a custom home builder. Check out the team’s schedule at [www.olsmsports.com/freshman.html](http://www.olsmsports.com/freshman.html)

Class of ‘75 Christmas Party

Members of the OLSM Class of 1975 gathered on Sunday, December 7, 2025, for their annual Christmas Party get together at the Polish Cultural Center in Troy, Michigan. They were joined by Alumni Relations Officer Robert Mazur and Alumni Association President Ken Smerecki (See photo on page 8).

Trey McKenney (P’25)

Prep Class of 2025 alumnus Trey McKenney is putting up the points for the University of Michigan Men’s Basketball team, currently ranked #2 in the nation (as of press time).



ORCHARD LAKE ST. MARY'S  
ANNUAL FATHER/SON  
MASS & LUNCHEON  
Save the Date  
Sunday, January 25  
Details coming soon:  
[www.stmarysprep.com](http://www.stmarysprep.com)

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE  
ST. MARY'S CREW  
50<sup>TH</sup>  
Anniversary  
AUCTION  
SATURDAY 7 FEB 06:00 PM  
REV. JOHN RAKOCZY GYMNASIUM  
3535 COMMERCE ROAD, ORCHARD LAKE  
COCKTAIL ATTIRE REQUESTED  
PURCHASE TICKETS VIA THE LINK BELOW  
BY JANUARY 17, 2026  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2026CREWAUCTION](https://tinyurl.com/2026CREWAUCTION)





# ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS & NETWORKING EVENT



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 | 6 PM**  
**GALERIA ON CAMPUS**

Join us for an evening celebrating the rich connections and traditions shared by Orchard Lake Schools alumni. Gather with fellow alumni for a strolling dinner and to witness this year's junior class finalists as they present their heartfelt essays on the profound impact of being an Eaglet, competing for senior year scholarships.

**TICKETS: \$50 Advanced Online | \$75 at Door**

*Advance ticket deadline: February 9th  
All proceeds benefit the Alumni Scholarship Fund.*

**TO REGISTER:**  
**Scan Code or email: [sgonzales@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:sgonzales@orchardlakeschools.com)**

**QUESTIONS:**  
**Contact Stephanie Gonzales at (248) 392-9209**

TO REGISTER ONLINE,  
SCAN CODE BELOW

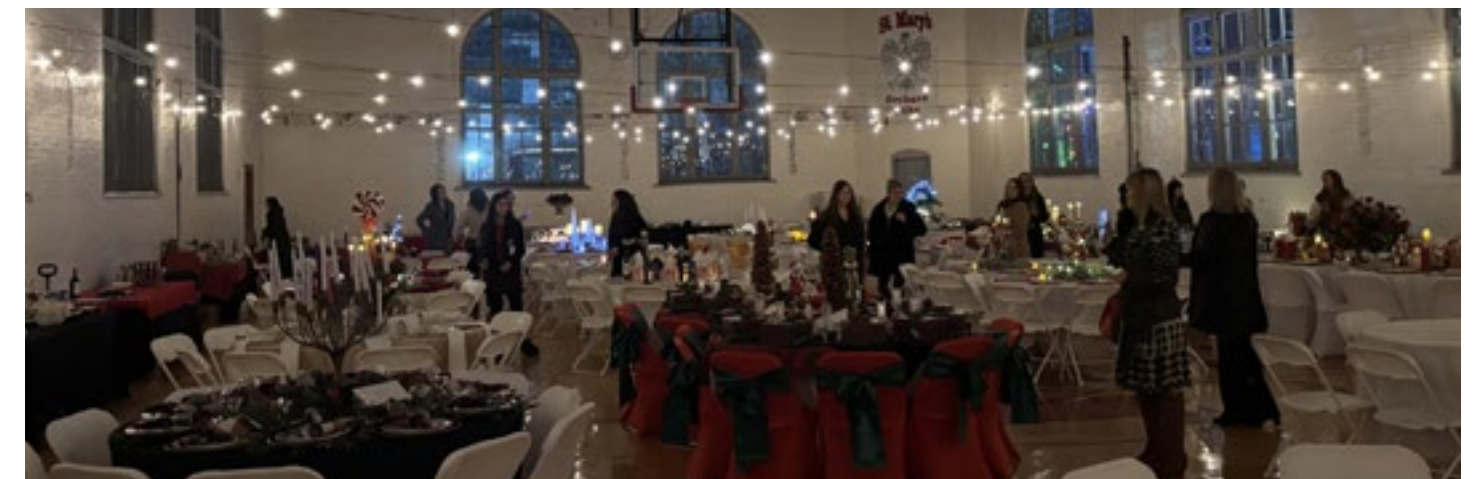
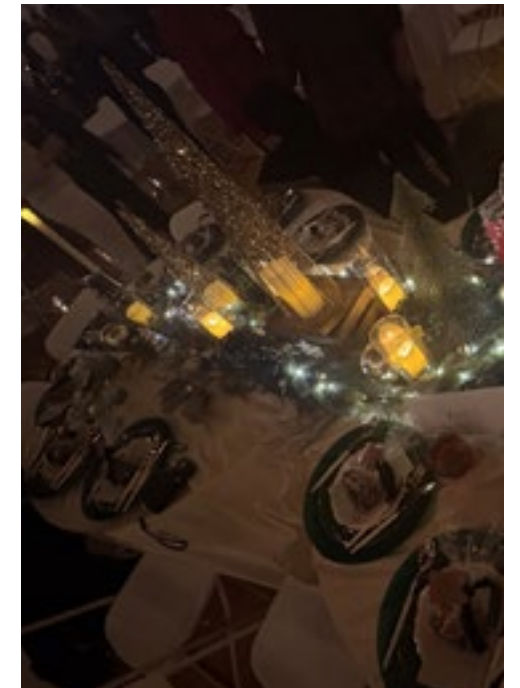


Oh, What a Beautiful Night for

## CANDLELIGHT

The Christmas season at Orchard Lake shines so brightly with our time-honored traditions, especially *Advent by Candlelight*, held each year on the first Thursday of December, and organized by Maureen Gross and many dedicated members of our campus community. The evening begins with a vigil Mass in the Shrine Chapel celebrated by Fr. Witek, followed

by a walk through the glorious Christmas lights of the Richard & Mary Trzcinski Quad to the Fr. Rakoczy Old Gym. Inside the gym, the magic of the season glows with twinkling lights and tables adorned with the decorative appointments of each table host who serves a meal and/or desserts.



Weeks before the event, tables were made available, and many were reserved by Prep parents who chose to become table hosts and invited their guests, friends and/or family, and treated them to a meal and/or desserts. Each host can decorate their table as they wish with seasonal and festive accents including candles. Hosts set up their tables the afternoon prior to the event. Tables are on a first come, first serve basis without any cost for hosting a table. Table or individual donations to THE MARY PROJECT Grotto Beautification are greatly appreciated.



Polish Christmas Eve Tradition

# 4th Annual WIGILIA



BY **JOSEPH MAJCHER**  
CHAIRMAN PRO TEM, ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER

Orchard Lake's St. John Paul II Liturgical Center sponsored its 4th Annual Campus "Wigilia" Mass and Dinner on December 13th. In the Polish culture, "Wigilia," i.e., Christmas Eve, is undoubtedly the most festively celebrated religious holiday. Although there may be some minor regional differences, "Wigilia" is celebrated uniformly throughout Poland. It begins with decorating the Christmas tree followed by reading the Nativity from the New Testament, then wishing each other well by sharing the "opłatek." Next, those gathered enjoy a meatless 12 course dinner, Christmas Carols, the exchanging of gifts, and the evening culminates with Midnight Mass.

Celebrating and promoting Polish language and culture is a fundamental objective of the St. John Paul II Liturgical Center at the Orchard Lake Schools. Polish culture and Catholicism are inextricably linked. Sponsoring "Wigilia" on campus fulfills one dimension of this objective.

The campus celebration began with Polish Mass in the Shrine Chapel accompanied by the renowned Filarets Polish Choir followed by a traditional "Wigilia" dinner, to include sharing the opłatek, in the Campus Dining Hall and concluded with Polish and

English Christmas carols. This year's attendance set a record of 121 attendees.

Many contributed this year's Wigilia huge success. Fr. Bernard Witek, Margaret Wozny and Joe Majcher of the Liturgical Center organized the event. Marco Santia and the Dining Hall staff did a great job serving the food that was catered by the American Polish Cultural Center in Troy. Sister Genowefa Potaczała, of the Polish Institute, helped with food preparation. Prep students Kaden Gibbs, Sidney Smerecki, Joseph Smerecki, Avelyna Reynaert, and Ava Wybo helped with waiting on the tables. Prep Class of 1963 alumnus, grandfather of two current Prep students, and Alumni Association President Ken Smerecki attended with his family members. Robert Mazur and Lisa Gray of the Development Department decorated the tables. Doug Fackler and the Maintenance Department did a great job with the Dining Hall and Chapel set-up.

Centrum Liturgiczne Świętego Jana Pawła II stara się obchodzić najważniejsze Polskie narodowe i religijne święta oraz pielęgnować i rozpowszechniać język Polski i kulturę na terenie Szkół w Orchard Lake i ponad. Obchody Wigilii na terenie Szkół pomagają w realizacji tego celu. Jak wiemy, katolicyzm i polska kultura są ze sobą nierozdzielnie związane.

## A special Mass CELEBRATING THE FEAST of SS CYRIL & METHODIUS

Fr. Bernard Witek SDS, Celebrant



POLISH DINNER WILL FOLLOW IN THE CAMPUS DINING HALL.

**COST IS \$20 PER PERSON**

PLEASE RSVP BY FEBRUARY 11

TO (248) 602-7579 OR BERNARDWITEK@YAHOO.COM

# Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 1:00 PM

SEMINARY CHAPEL • ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS



# REFLECTION

BY FR. BERNARD WITEK  
DIRECTOR | ST. JOHN PAUL II LITURGICAL CENTER

Many people including some Catholics think that Christmas ends on December 26, while liturgically Christmas Season starts on Christmas Eve (December 24) and one of the important feasts during Christmas Season is the Epiphany of the Lord. Its celebration on January 6 predated the celebration of Christmas on December 25. The early Church, especially in the East, in one feast of the Epiphany on January 6 commemorated the Nativity, Visitation of the Magi, Baptism of Christ, and the Wedding of Cana. By the fourth century, some dioceses started to celebrate Christmas and the Epiphany as separate feasts. The Council of Tours in 567 set the dates for

the celebration of Christmas Day on December 25 and the Epiphany on January 6. While the traditional date for the Epiphany is January 6, in the United States its celebration is moved to the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. In 2026, it is celebrated on January 4.

In the Latin rite of the Catholic Church, the celebration of the Epiphany focuses mainly on the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God to the Three Wise Men (also called Magi) and through them to the whole world. St. John Paul II in his homily on January 6, 1996, points out the symbolic role of the Wise Men:

## In the Words of

# ST. JOHN PAUL II

*Today, the Solemnity of Epiphany, this is how the prophet's words resound. The ancient, evocative oracle of Isaiah in a way foretells the light that shone on the stable in Bethlehem on Christmas night, anticipating the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (Lk 2:14). In a certain sense, in pointing to the light the prophet is pointing to Christ. As it shone for the shepherds seeking the newborn Messiah, so this light shines today on the path of the Magi, come from the East to adore him who was born King of the Jews.*

*The Magi represent the peoples of the whole earth who, in the light of the Lord's birth, set out on the way leading to Jesus and, in a certain sense, are the first to receive that salvation inaugurated by the*

*Saviour's birth and brought to fulfilment in the paschal mystery of his Death and Resurrection. When they reached Bethlehem, the Magi adored the divine Child and offered him symbolic gifts, becoming forerunners of the peoples and nations which down the centuries never cease to seek and meet Christ.*



# ZAPRASZAMY

You are invited to join us for Polish 1st Sunday!  
*A special Mass at the Orchard Lake Schools to pray for Polonia*

## Sunday, Feb 1<sup>st</sup> • 1:00 PM

*at the Shrine of St. John Paul II, celebrated by Fr. Bernard Witek*

## SHRINE OF ST. JOHN PAUL II: JUBILEE YEAR PILGRIMAGE SITE

Did you know that the Archdiocese of Detroit has designated our Shrine Chapel at Orchard Lake one of 12 Detroit-area pilgrimage sites ahead of the Jubilee 2025; a place for pilgrims to visit and receive a plenary indulgence?

*The Church celebrates ordinary jubilees every 25 years. In December 2024, the late Pope Francis ushered in the Holy Year 2025 by opening the Holy Doors of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome for a year of grace, forgiveness and renewal — centered on the theme, "Pilgrims of Hope."*

*In 1470, Pope Paul II established the practice of celebrating jubilees every 25 years, instead of 50, to allow more people to experience a Holy Year within their lifetimes.*



LOOKING FOR AN IMPACTFUL CAMPUS DEDICATION OR NAMING OPPORTUNITIES  
THAT LEAVE A LASTING CAMPUS IMPRESSION FOR GENERATIONS TO ENJOY?  
CONTACT: CHRIS CZARNIK AT CCZARNIK@ORCHARDLAKESCHOOLS.COM



## Polish Institute

## UPDATE

BY ANIA BIECIUK

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR POLONIA AFFAIRS, POLISH  
INSTITUTE OF CULTURE & RESEARCH AT ORCHARD LAKE

The Christmas season has always been a time of reflection, memory, and continuity, values deeply rooted in Polish tradition. As we move from the warmth of the holidays into the promise of a New Year, I find myself especially grateful for our community and for the shared

responsibility we carry in preserving and celebrating our cultural heritage. With this spirit in mind, I extend my sincere wishes for a peaceful, healthy, and hope-filled 2026.

The beginning of the year brings renewed energy and focus at the Polish Institute. We are currently preparing to unveil a new exhibit drawn from the depth of our collections, one that reflects both history and contemporary relevance. Each exhibition serves as a reminder that Polish culture is not only preserved, but continually interpreted and shared. Details will be announced soon.

January also marks the return of our student feature, a program especially close to our mission. This year, we are proud to present a student from the St. Mary's Preparatory Girls Division, Ella Selakowski. Highlighting our students affirms the essential role young people play in carrying forward Polish culture, language, and values, and we are honored to spotlight their achievements and voices.

We are equally excited to announce two upcoming events that exemplify the breadth of our programming. On February 13, we will host the Casa Piano Quartet, featuring musicians from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, in *Romantic Piano Quartets from the Heartlands of Europe*. This concert will offer an evening of exceptional artistry rooted in the European musical tradition. On March 7, we welcome back a beloved community event with the

return of our fashion show, *Blooms of Tradition*. Now in its second edition, the show will again feature Recultured Designs, exploring the intersection of heritage, craftsmanship, and contemporary design.



As we look ahead, we also reflect with pride on how we concluded 2025. On November 30, the Galeria became the setting for an extraordinary evening, *Echoes of Europe: Arias from Poland and Beyond*. We were honored to host acclaimed Polish soprano Dominika Zamara, who joined us directly following a concert engagement in Italy. Accompanied by pianist Vanessa Kwiatkowski, the performance unfolded with elegance and emotional depth. The season's first snowfall provided a fitting backdrop, and the evening was met with several standing ovations. A special and unexpected highlight came when Vanessa Kwiatkowski and her husband, Jeffrey Nicholas, delighted the audience with a four-hands performance of Dvořák.

The following day, on December 1, Dominika Zamara led a student seminar with the Prep music students of Ms. Gina Dlugosielski. The thoughtful questions and lively exchange created a meaningful moment of mutual learning and exposure, offering our St. Mary's students a rare opportunity to engage directly with an international Polish artist.

These moments, both grand and intimate, remind us why our work matters. Through music, art, education, and shared experiences, we honor the legacy entrusted to us while shaping a vibrant future for Polish culture in America.

Z dumą i poczuciem odpowiedzialności kontynuujemy tę misję, pamiętając, że kultura to wspólne dziedzictwo, które zobowiązuje i jednoczy nas wszystkich.

Blooms of Tradition Fashion ShowA CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S DAY & TRIBUTE  
TO THE BRAVE WOMEN WHO PAVED THE PATH  
BEFORE US

The Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake proudly announces the return of *Blooms of Tradition*, an inspired fashion show featuring Recultured Designs by Olenka Lisiecki. A Michigan native whose label began in Farmington Hills and now thrives in San Francisco, Lisiecki is known for reimagining Polish florals and textiles into refined contemporary couture. The second edition of this distinguished event will take place on Saturday, March 7, 2026, inside the Galeria on the historic Orchard Lake Schools campus.

Timed near Women's Day, *Blooms of Tradition* celebrates the strength, courage, and perseverance of the women who came before us. These were women who faced war, displacement, and terror, yet rebuilt their lives in a new country with grace, resilience, and unwavering determination. Their stories of survival and reinvention continue to shape the legacy of Polonia, and this event honors their spirit and memory.

The runway will feature Lisiecki's newest designs modeled by students from Orchard Lake St. Mary's Preparatory School as well as members of the broader Polonia community, creating a dynamic intergenerational presentation rooted in heritage and identity.

"This event reflects the heart of our community," said Ania Bieciuk, Associate Director for Polonia Affairs at the Polish Institute of Culture & Research. "It honors the brave women whose courage carried them through unimaginable hardship and whose strength built the foundations on which we now stand. Their spirit lives on in our traditions, our families, and our cultural memory. *Blooms of Tradition* is our tribute

to them, expressed through the artistry of Olenka Lisiecki, whose work bridges the old world and the new with extraordinary elegance."

Guests will enjoy an evening of thoughtfully curated fashion, meaningful storytelling, and exceptional food and drinks in the warm and distinctive setting of the Galeria. The event reinforces the Institute's mission to promote and preserve Polish arts and culture while elevating contemporary creative voices shaped by heritage.

Further event information, including ticket sales and program announcements, will be released in early 2026. Check back often at [www.picrol.org](http://www.picrol.org) or email [info@picrol.org](mailto:info@picrol.org).



Olenka Lisiecki, Recultured Designs



# ECHOES OF EUROPE

## A Winter Concert to Remember



Against the quiet beauty of a snow-covered Orchard Lake campus, *Echoes of Europe* unfolded as an evening of extraordinary artistry and reflection. The

concert brought together soprano Dominika Zamara, pianist Vanessa Kwiatkowski, and guest pianist Jeffrey Nicholas for a program that resonated deeply with the spirit of the season and the cultural mission of the Polish Institute.

Dominika Zamara's voice carried both power and intimacy, filling the Galeria with expressive nuance and emotional depth. Her performance, paired seamlessly with Vanessa Kwiatkowski's sensitive and virtuosic accompaniment, created moments of stillness, drama, and lyric beauty. A special highlight of the evening was the four-hands piano selection performed by Kwiatkowski and Nicholas, adding a sense of joy and camaraderie that delighted the audience.

Despite the winter snowfall outside, the Galeria was warm and welcoming. Guests were invited to linger following the performance at a reception that



encouraged conversation and connection, while also exploring the Institute's newest winter exhibit. Featuring selections from the PICROL collection across multiple mediums, the exhibit offered a contemplative counterpoint to the music and reflected the richness and breadth of Polish cultural heritage.

The weekend concluded with a meaningful extension of the concert experience. On December 1, Dominika Zamara led a student seminar with the music students of Saint Mary's Preparatory. The session was marked by thoughtful dialogue, curiosity, and genuine engagement. Under the guidance of Prep music teacher Gina Dlugosielski, students asked insightful questions, exploring both the technical and human dimensions of vocal performance. It was a moment of shared learning that underscored the Institute's commitment to education, mentorship, and cultural exchange.

*Echoes of Europe* was more than a concert. It was an immersive cultural experience shaped by music, scholarship, and community, made all the more memorable by the winter setting and the generosity of the artists who shared their talents with such grace.

## OLSM Student Feature

# Ella Selakowski

As January has arrived, that means that New Year's and Three Kings day brings Poland a month of festivity, hope, and tradition. These special holidays are a cause for fun activities and celebrations throughout Poland as a beautiful way to start the new year.

The arrival of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, also known as *Sylwester i Nowy Rok*, named after St. Sylwester, whose feast day is on December 31st, means many fun gatherings and partaking in traditions for Poles. Not unlike here in the States, many celebrate the new year with fireworks, festive parties, toasts for the upcoming year, and with age-old traditions and superstitions so that a good year will follow. Partaking in these superstitions is believed to ensure a good year with prosperity and good fortune as anything you do on New Year's Day will reflect the rest of your year.

*Dzień Trzech Króli* or Three Kings Day, honoring the feast day of the three wise men who visited Jesus when he was born, marks the end of the Polish Christmas season on January 6. The day is a mix of both religious tradition and festive celebrations across Poland. It begins with a mass during which the priest blesses chalk, incense, and small symbolic pieces of gold. Afterward, families bring home their blessed chalk and write the traditional inscription C+M+B+2026 above their front door. Each letter stands for one of the magi, as well as abbreviating



a Latin phrase: *Christus mansionem benedicat*, meaning "May Christ bless this house". A more modern tradition that has blessed this day in Poland is the Three Kings Day parades (*Orszak Trzech Króli*), where people celebrate by having parades through city squares all around but the most well known is the parade hosted in Warsaw with many dressed in costumes to portray the three kings.

January in Poland is a truly festive, fun, and joyful time to behold, *Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!*



## VISIT THE POLISH INSTITUTE ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

We invite you to explore our social media pages for more photos and news.

(Online readers can click below)

**FACEBOOK:** [Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake](#) **INSTAGRAM:** [@picrOrchardLake](#)

For more information, visit our website at [www.picrol.org](http://www.picrol.org)





# THE MARY PROJECT

AT ORCHARD LAKE SCHOOLS

*Please visit and enjoy the NEW*

## WALKING ROSARY AND REFLECTION AREA

*in the Marian Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at  
St. Mary's Preparatory.*

**WE ARE ASKING FOR DONATIONS TO HELP DEFRAY THE  
COST OF THIS ADDITION TO THE GROTTTO.**

### YOU CAN DONATE BY:

- 1) Purchasing a brick paver. Order forms are available at the gate or online at the link [www.orchardlakeschools.com/ways-to-give](http://www.orchardlakeschools.com/ways-to-give)
- 2) Leave a donation in the donation box at the Grotto inside the candle area.
- 3) Mail a check (payable to The Mary Project) to:

*The Mary Project  
3535 Commerce Road  
Orchard Lake, MI 48324*

For naming opportunities, please contact Maureen Gross at  
[themaryproject@myyahoo.com](mailto:themaryproject@myyahoo.com).

*All donations are tax deductible. EIN: 82-5453994*



*The Mary Project*



After many years of thoughtful footsteps, the pathways of the Marian Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes at Orchard Lake St. Mary's have given way to age and are in need of repair. The Mary Project needs your help to sustain this prayerful space.

We are soliciting your support to repave the walkways and paths, starting with the walkway from the Grotto towards the lake. It will be paved with custom bricks to make it much more attractive and durable than poured concrete, and we are asking that you donate one or more of the bricks.

You may individualize a brick for you, or your family, honor a loved one or create an in-memoriam message. The donated bricks will become a part of the Grotto, paving the way for generations of visitors. As a friend of the Grotto and Orchard Lake Schools, please take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to have your commemorative brick(s) become a permanent part of this prayerful space.

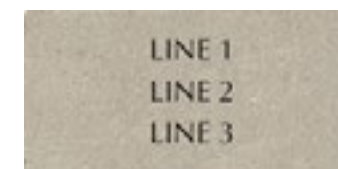
Construction of Phase 3 will begin in early November. Sales for Phase 4 (continuing towards the lake) begin September 15, 2025. There is plenty of space for additional commemorative bricks. Bricks purchased for Phase 4 are \$150 each and will be installed in November 2026.

The bricks are 4" x 8" x 2 1/4" and are engraved using state-of-the-art laser technology. Every brick engraving is guaranteed for life!

All donations are tax deductible. EIN: 82-5453994

**ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 15, 2026**

**PLEASE PROOF READ CAREFULLY! \$20.00 FOR CHANGES MADE AFTER ORDER IS PLACED.**



**\$150 - 4x8 Brick**

3 lines of text, 20 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation)


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### MAIL FORM AND PAYMENT TO:

The Mary Project  
3535 Commerce Road  
Orchard Lake, MI 48324

#### MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

The Mary Project





# EVER FORWARD!

## ZAWSZE DO PRZODU!

### STRATEGIC MASTER PLANNING PROJECT

The “Ever Forward” Strategic Plan has been approved, and the Orchard Lake Schools has initiated a new path. We are moving on to the second phase of the Master Plan for campus. “Ever Forward” charts a path forward for the OLS and its three major operational divisions.

That path goes in the direction Fr. Dąbrowski envisioned – it leads toward OLS providing the best possible organizational structures and activities to enable the spiritual formation and educational growth of the people OLS serves.

For more information, visit [www.orchardlakeschools.com/Ever-Forward](http://www.orchardlakeschools.com/Ever-Forward)

### MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS

Throughout the year, donors to the Orchard Lake Schools enroll their loved ones in the “Friends of the Orchard Lake Schools”. Prayers are offered at every mass at the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. John Paul II for those names enrolled. These names are those that have been added from the month of November.

CHET ADAMS (Chester Adamczyk) P’36, Alumnus of the year (1990)	WILLIAM HOY BISHOP HURLEY JEAN KOLDYS MICHAELLA KOLDYS WILLIAM KOLDYS MICHELLE LUCIDO JOHNNY MASOURAS RICHARD G. MCGINESS JON RANDALL MEYERS, JR. TIMOTHY NEBOYSKEY HELEN NELSON ANNA OGDEN	KATHY PAJA STEPHANIE PETRYKOWSKI ELIZABETH PLUTO, (Felician Sister) JODY RADZINSKI (From Zammit Family) ANATASIA RACHOR ALBERT TAPIA RODRIQUEZ PATRICIA SCHINCKER-GIBBINS LINDA TUCKER GENEVIEVE WILSON JOHN J. WILSON
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For more enrollment information, please contact Lisa Gray at [lgray@orchardlakeschools.com](mailto:lgray@orchardlakeschools.com)

January 2026

## upcoming EVENTS highlights

- 1

Happy New Year

2

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Regina | 7:00 PM

4

Epiphany  
Polish 1st Sunday | 1:00 PM (Mass Only)  
Galeria Open | 12-3:00 PM

5

Classes Resume

6

Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Detroit Lincoln-King | 7 PM

7

Ski/Snowboard-Indy Race #1 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Boys Varsity Hockey vs. Cranbrook | 7:30 PM

8

Bowling vs. U of D/Marian | Bowl One | 3:30 PM

12

Ski/Snowboard Team Race #1 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Roseville | 7:00 PM

13

Bowling vs. Divine Child | Oak Lanes | 3:30 PM

14

Bowling vs. De La Salle | Wonderland Lanes | 3:30 PM  
Ski/Snowboard Team Race #2 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Boys Varsity Hockey vs. Trenton | 7:30 PM

17

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Goodrich | 1:30 PM

19

No School – Martin Luther King Day  
Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Airport | 6:00 PM

19-20

Ski/Snowboard Indy Race #2 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM

21

Ski/Snowboard Race #3 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Wrestling vs. Divine Child (Senior Night) | 5:30 PM

22

Bowling vs. CC/Mercy | Wonderland Lanes | 3:30 PM  
Girls Varsity Hockey vs. Cranbrook | 4:30 PM

23

Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Brother Rice | 7:00 PM

24

Girls Varsity Hockey vs. Mid-Michigan | 5:00 PM

25

Father/Son Mass & Luncheon

26

Ski/Snowboard Team Race #3 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Chelsea | 7:00 PM

27

Bowling vs. U of D | Wonderland Lanes | 3:30 PM  
Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Marian | 7:00 PM

28

Ski/Snowboard Team Race #4 | Alpine Valley | 4:30 PM  
Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Country Day (Senior Night) | 7:00 PM

29

Bowling vs. Divine Child | Wonderland Lanes | 3:30 PM  
Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Regina | 7:00 PM

30

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Divine Child | 7:00 PM





January 2026

# MASS schedule

## **THURSDAY, JANUARY 1 | SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

Midnight	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
9:00 AM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. MCDONELL   LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 4 | FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	MSGR. BROWNE   LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### **Polish 1st Sunday**

1:00 PM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
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## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 11**

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. WHITAKER   LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 18**

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. MCDONELL   LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
1:00 PM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 25**

9:00 AM	FR. WITEK   POLISH*	SEMINARY CHAPEL
9:00 AM	FR. MCDONELL   LATIN	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
11:00 AM	FR. WITEK   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

\*The Polish Mass is now live streamed at:

[www.youtube.com/@orchardlakeschools9385](https://www.youtube.com/@orchardlakeschools9385) within the "Live" tab



### **DAILY MASSES**

MONDAY-FRIDAYS	7:00 PM   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
SATURDAYS	9:00 AM   ENGLISH	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE

### **SHRINE OPEN HOURS**

SUNDAY & SATURDAY	8:00 AM – 9:00 PM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
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### **EXTRA-LITURGICAL DEVOTIONS**

1 <sup>ST</sup> FRIDAY 1/2	MASS   7:00 PM   DEVOTIONS * FR. WITEK	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
1 <sup>ST</sup> SATURDAY 1/3	MASS   9:00AM   DEVOTIONS * FR. WITEK	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
THURSDAY 1/15	BIBLE STUDY   7:45 PM	SEMINARY CHAPEL
FRIDAY 1/16	DIVINE MERCY PRAYERS   7:45 PM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
	KRAŁ BIBLIJY   8:00 PM	SEMINARY CHAPEL

### **CONFESSIONS**

MONDAY-FRIDAYS	6:00 – 6:55 PM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE
SATURDAYS	8:00 – 8:55 AM	ST. JOHN PAUL II SHRINE