



Michael Collins, Principal and Parish Music Director

Mr. Collins, from Cincinnati, Ohio, graduated *magna cum laude* in 2003, from Xavier University with a bachelor of science degree in music education and music performance. He went on to earn a master's degree in pastoral ministry at the Athenaeum of Ohio in 2010. Mr. Collins has been active in parish ministry from a young age and has worked in various positions within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for the past 19 years. This includes serving as director of religious education, youth minister, and music director at St. Margaret Mary and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. He has taught music and religion in Catholic schools for the past 13 years. In addition, he has served on various committees for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Mr. Collins joined the staff of St. Peter in Chains in July 2014, as pastoral associate of music and liturgy. In June 2015, he received his administrative principal license and served as assistant principal before being named principal in 2016. He feels blessed to be a part of both the church and school communities and to have the opportunity to share the teachings of the Catholic faith. Mr. Collins and his wife, Wilma, are the proud parents of five children and grandparents of three.

Michelle Luebbe, School Secretary

Mrs. Luebbe began working as an office aide and classroom aide in 2014. She moved into the role of school secretary in the fall of 2017. She and her husband, Steve, have been active members of St. Peter in Chains parish for 10 years. They have two children who attend St. Peter's School. Mrs. Luebbe has volunteered in the church and the school for many years. Her service includes teaching CLOW (Children's Liturgy of the Word) on Sundays and working as a committee chair for EPIC (the school's parent-teacher organization), a Girl Scout leader, a CYO coach, and a classroom volunteer. "St. Peter feels like home to me," says Mrs. Luebbe. "The students and their families make up a wonderful community. We call them our St. Peter's family. This is such a special place and it makes me happy to come to work each day."

Heather Hart, Kindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Hart is in her ninth year of teaching kindergarten at St. Peter and was one of 17 educators recently honored by the Hamilton Community Foundation as an Educator of Excellence. She taught for several years as a long-term kindergarten substitute in the Hamilton City school district and also has experience teaching at the pre-K level. A graduate of Miami University, she has taken graduate

studies in and received training as an intervention specialist, which permits her to be a more effective educator both for students with mild-to-moderate disabilities and for those who achieve beyond grade-level expectations.

Mrs. Hart has served as a fellow of the Dayton STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Center, developing and writing curriculum for publication. She continuously looks for new and creative ways to engage students in learning, while maintaining a fun atmosphere for the school's youngest students. In her classroom, she utilizes a variety of hands-on experiences through centers, activities, technology, singing, and dancing. She and her husband are members of St. Peter in Chains Church and are blessed with four children, two of whom are now enrolled at St. Peter's.

Karen Krabacher, Kindergarten Aide

Mrs. Krabacher, a graduate of Miami University, assists our kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Hart. Together they are a formidable team able to deal with anything a group of kindergartners can throw at them! Mrs. Krabacher is a former substitute teacher for grades K-8 at various local schools and holds substitute and teacher's aide licenses. Her favorite part of the day is when she works one-on-one with a student. "It is so rewarding to see a frustrated student finally *get it*," she says. "The smile on a student's face when first seeing a word in print and realizing they can read it is priceless!"

Amy O'Connell, First Grade Teacher

Mrs. O'Connell joined the staff of St. Peter in Chains this year. She is in her 25th year of teaching, having taught in both Catholic and public schools in Ohio and Georgia. Originally from Tiffin, Ohio, Mrs. O'Connell is a product of 16 years of Catholic education. She graduated from Walsh College in Canton, Ohio, with a B.A. in elementary education and has taught in grades K-2 ever since.

"I am excited to be teaching at St. Peter in Chains because it feels like home to me," she says. "It is full of the faith and traditions that I have loved my entire life. I am looking forward to sharing Jesus's love and teachings with the first-graders here." Mrs. O'Connell resides in Lebanon, Ohio, with her husband, Matt. They are parents to three sons.

Laura Warner, Second Grade Teacher

In 2016, Mrs. Warner was one of 13 local educators—chosen from a pool of hundreds of teachers—to be nominated for the Harry T. Wilks Educator of the Year Award. Her dedication to the craft of teaching and her warm and thoughtful approach to each student make her a tremendous asset to St. Peter in Chains.

A graduate of Miami University, Mrs. Warner teaches second grade and also serves as chair of the school's Individual Professional Development Committee for Teacher Certification and co-chair of its Accreditation Committee. She previously taught at Van Buren Elementary. Mrs. Warner's favorite subject to teach is reading, and she particularly enjoys the second grade, due to its sacramental importance in preparing students for First Reconciliation and First Communion. "I love

that I can incorporate teaching about God into any lesson,” she says. Mrs. Warner and her husband, Larry—a CPA at Stephenson and Warner CPA firm—are the parents of a daughter and son, both now in college.

Emma Ramminger, Third Grade Teacher

Mrs. Ramminger is in her third year at St. Peter in Chains School and has quickly become a student favorite. She has past experience as a student-teacher for the third grade at Cherokee Elementary and has worked in after-school care for grades K-8 at St. Jude Elementary in Western Hills. Mrs. Ramminger graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2015, with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education. She has also earned an early reading certificate, which ensures her expertise in teaching reading and writing to K-3 children.

Mrs. Ramminger herself is a product of local Catholic schools, having attended St. Jude Elementary and Mother of Mercy High School. She believes that St. Peter is the perfect place for her to share her faith and knowledge with a new generation of schoolchildren.

Angie Wirtz, Fourth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Wirtz graduated from Miami University. She is in her 14th year of teaching at St. Peter’s, having taught fourth, fifth, and sixth grades throughout those years. Prior to coming here, she taught at Pleasant Run Elementary School. Mrs. Wirtz has been a lifelong member of St. Peter in Chains, even attending school here since first grade! She and her husband, who works for the City of Hamilton as a firefighter, have two daughters and two grandsons. Mrs. Wirtz is active in St. Peter’s youth group and currently leads our service-learning program.

Mrs. Wirtz takes an energetic and creative approach to teaching, incorporating many interactive, problem-based experiences and hands-on activities into her lessons. She enjoys helping those in need and loves to pass on that experience to her students through service learning. As she explains, “I love St. Peter in Chains because it has always been my home, and the people here are an extended family. The students keep me young and energetic. They remind me to never go a day without laughing, and that learning is a lifelong adventure. This place is truly a blessing, and we are so lucky to have St. Peter’s in our community.”

Katie Gibboney, Fifth Grade Homeroom Teacher

Miss Gibboney is the fifth grade homeroom teacher and teaches fifth- and sixth-grade math and language arts. A graduate of McAuley High School, she grew up on the west side of Cincinnati and is a parishioner of St. James White Oak. Miss Gibboney graduated from the University of Dayton in 2013, with a degree in middle childhood education, concentrating in math and language arts. This is her fifth year of teaching, and she feels blessed to have started her teaching career at St. Peter. Since she grew up with a Catholic education, Miss Gibboney is extremely thankful that she has been given the opportunity to spread the faith and her passion for service, along with her love of learning, to the students she encounters every day.

Anne Gerdes, Sixth Grade Homeroom Teacher

Mrs. Gerdes grew up on Long Island, New York, and received her BFA in music education from Long Island University. She and her family moved to Ohio in 1993. As the sixth grade homeroom teacher, Mrs. Gerdes is also responsible for teaching religion to grades five through eight and social studies to grades five and six.

“I feel that I was called to be here,” says Mrs. Gerdes. “I felt the warmth of St. Peter in Chains from the very first moment that I walked through the door. These children deserve the very best in Catholic education, and I strive every day to provide that.” Mrs. Gerdes and her husband, Martin, have three sons, two of whom currently attend St. Peter’s.

Cheryl Kordes, Seventh Grade Homeroom Teacher

Mrs. Kordes has been a dedicated teacher at St. Peter in Chains since 2005. As the seventh grade homeroom teacher, she teaches seventh- and eighth-grade language arts and math. Mrs. Kordes graduated from the University of Cincinnati, and her prior experience includes teaching at Our Lady of Lourdes, C.O. Harrison, St. Jude, and Three Rivers. She has been a member of Our Lady of Visitation Parish since 1993.

Mrs. Kordes manages the school Giving Tree to help the needy in the community, oversees the collection of can tabs to benefit The Ronald McDonald House, and is editor-in-chief of the school newspaper. She is also a mentor teacher and co-chairs the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA) Self-Study. These special events help build strength and character by teaching our students to contribute positively to society.

“The students at St. Peter’s are conscientious, creative, and enthusiastic about learning,” says Mrs. Kordes. “Parents, colleagues, and staff are encouraging and supportive. Best of all are the smiles that greet me each day as we embark on fulfilling God’s will for our lives.”

Elizabeth Larson, Eighth Grade Homeroom Teacher

Ms. Larson is the eighth grade homeroom teacher and teaches science to the fifth through eighth grades, along with seventh- and eighth-grade social studies. She graduated from the University of Dayton in 2010, with a concentration in middle childhood education, emphasis on math, science, and social studies.

Ms. Larson taught eighth-grade science in Surprise, Arizona, before relocating to Adana, Turkey, to work for the U.S. Air Force as a child development director. Ms. Larson is in her second year at St. Peter in Chains after spending the two years prior teaching middle school in south Florida. In addition to teaching, Ms. Larson is the youth minister for the parish and is excited “to see all the work that God has planned for our students.”

Mary Zeller, Sixth-Grade Math, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra I Teacher

Shortly after graduating from the University of Toledo with a bachelor's degree in education, Mrs. Zeller's career path took her out of the field of education for several years. When the business she was working for closed its doors for good, Mrs. Zeller took that as an opportunity to return to school—both as a teacher and as a student. While studying for a master's degree at Xavier University, Mrs. Zeller worked fulltime as a classroom teacher, first teaching math and business classes in a public high school and later teaching math and science at a Catholic grade school. Upon the completion of her master's degree, Mrs. Zeller took a position as a guidance counselor in a local Christian school and stayed there for 13 years.

After serving as foster parents for six years, Mrs. Zeller and her husband adopted a son and daughter. These changes in her family led her to pursue a part-time position, which she found at St. Peter in Chains, where she teaches sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade mathematics.

Mariarosa Reina, Spanish Teacher

Mrs. Reina taught catechesis classes, in English and in her native Spanish, for many years in the Cincinnati area before joining the St. Peter's staff. Born in Colombia (South America), Mrs. Reina says, "I truly love teaching at St. Peter in Chains. The teachers here often work together to make a cross-curricular connection, for example, between art and religion. I like to facilitate this. It's so much fun to see the students make the connection between the subjects. The students here are the best I have ever taught."

"I see each grade once a week, and their enthusiasm is an inspiration for me. I learn as much from them as they learn from me. Our Spanish classroom is a different setting from their regular classrooms, allowing students to experience the learning process in new and compelling ways. It is so gratifying to see students working through the creative process and be excited about it."

Bridget Beatty, Art Teacher

Mrs. Beatty is a graduate of Miami University and previously taught art at Central Academy, part of the Middletown City school district. As an art teacher, her goal is to create a fun environment in which students learn to recognize that art is all around them, while also becoming creative problem solvers and developing their art skills and techniques.

Mrs. Beatty has also had an art studio at the Pendleton Art Center in Middletown, selling her own whimsical and abstract art—a venture, she confesses, that has slowed since she and her husband adopted two children. "I love that art has no right or wrong answers," she says, "and I want every student to know that it's okay to make mistakes. It's what you learn from your mistakes that count! The confidence I see my students gaining as they make art is something I hope carries over into other avenues in their lives."

Barbara Blasch, Music Teacher

Music is fun! At least that's what Mrs. Blasch hopes her students think. As a lifelong piano player, a former percussionist in her high school marching/concert band, the organist at St. Jerome Church, and a guitarist and lead singer with the band Skirt and Boots, Mrs. Blasch shares her passion for music in many ways. She believes everyone can and should learn to play an instrument and/or sing.

At Georgetown College, Mrs. Blasch studied music, math, and computer science, earning her B.A. in 1983. She went on to NKU's Chase College of Law, graduating in 1987. Mrs. Blasch practiced law in Kentucky and Ohio, mostly in the area of real estate. After returning to the work force when her three children reached school age, Mrs. Blasch felt called to become a teacher. She taught paralegal classes at the University of Cincinnati before switching to music, teaching at Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori School for six years while also providing private piano and guitar lessons.

Mrs. Blasch resides in Milford with her husband, Paul, and their three children. She enjoys anything music-related, such as the symphony, Broadway musicals, outdoor concerts, and bluegrass festivals. Mrs. Blasch is also a nature enthusiast.

Michael Otte, Physical Education and Lifetime Fitness Teacher

Mr. Otte is in his second year at St. Peter in Chains School. He previously taught at St. Joseph School in Cold Springs, Kentucky. Mr. Otte grew up in Erlanger, Kentucky, and is a graduate of St. Henry District High School (2006), where he was a four-sport athlete. He earned a bachelor's degree in physical education with a minor in health education from Northern Kentucky University in 2010, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in teacher leadership at the University of the Cumberlands.

Mr. Otte's coaching experience includes grade-school basketball, club volleyball, and boys' varsity volleyball. "I have been a part of Catholic Schools my entire life, as a student and now as a teacher. So I feel right at home here at St. Peter's!" Mr. Otte and his wife, Amy, have two children.

Carol Leach, Speech-Language Pathologist

Ms. Leach is the speech-language pathologist (SLP) at St. Peter in Chains School. She received her master of arts in speech-language pathology from the University of Cincinnati in 2011. Following graduation, she completed a nine-month clinical fellowship and earned her certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Ms. Leach has worked with students from preschool to age 22 since graduating in 2011. Ms. Leach has been a member of Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Montgomery since 1999.

Heather Adams, Intervention Specialist

A graduate of Badin High School, Mrs. Adams is thrilled to be a part of the St. Peter in Chains family. She holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and dual licensure as both an early childhood educator (Pre-K-3) and intervention specialist (K-12). Mrs. Adams also holds a reading endorsement for grades K-12. Mrs. Adams has previously taught kindergarten and third grade, as

well as served as an intervention specialist for students in elementary school. At St. Peter in Chains, Mrs. Adams supports students and classrooms throughout the school, helping students to build confidence as they improve their mastery of foundational skills.

Linda Reimer, Librarian and Media Coordinator

Mrs. Reimer began her employment with St. Peter as a classroom aide. In 2006, she became the full-time librarian and technology coordinator and is currently the media coordinator. Mrs. Reimer troubleshoots computer problems, keeps the computers up to date, and sets up software and websites for individual classes. She is also the administrator of our school management program, OptionC.

As librarian, she coordinates the Accelerated Reader program with the teachers. She also manages the annual fall and spring Scholastic Book Fairs. She enjoys passing her love of reading on to the students. "When I recommend a book to a student and they come back to me and say, 'This was a great book, I loved it,' that is the best reward of my job," she says. Mrs. Reimer and her husband, Bob, have three children, all of whom graduated from both St. Peter in Chains and Badin High School.