



St. Mary's welcomes Fr. Weeder

By Ashley Gaughan

West Point recently welcomed Father James Weeder to St. Mary's Church as lead pastor and president of the Guardian Angels Central Catholic High and Elementary schools.

Father Weeder's duties commenced July 1 of this year.

Growing up in Albion, Fr. Weeder helped on his parents' farm along with his two brothers and two sisters. He attended St. Michael's Grade School and Boone Central High School.

Having an interest in mechanical repair after high school, he attended Southeast Community College in Milford where he earned an AAS degree in Electromechanical Technology.

He worked for several years using that degree doing industrial maintenance in the manufacturing and packaging industry.

While working in that field, one of his coworkers entered the seminary. Fr. Weeder didn't think much about it at the time, but looking back that was the witness God used to place a desire on his heart to consider the priesthood.

After much prayer and consideration, he decided to further discern the call by attending seminary which he did at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio beginning in 2003.

After his third year of seminary, Fr. Weeder took part in a five-day silent retreat. It was during this retreat he decided to fully embrace the call that God put on his heart to become a priest.

After graduating in 2007, from the Pontifical College Josephinum with a Liberal Arts degree with an emphasis in history and a minor in philosophy, his journey led him to Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St.



Father James Weeder began his role as lead pastor at St. Mary's on July 1 of this year.

Louis, Mo. where he spent the next four years studying theology.

In May of 2011 he graduated with an MDiv and MA in Theology. On June 4, a few weeks later, he was ordained to the priesthood.

Fr. Weeder's first assignment brought him to St. Margaret Mary Parish and School in Omaha where he served four years.

In 2015, he was assigned to St. Patrick Parish and St. Mary School in O'Neill and St. Joseph in Amelia. A year later, Fr. Weeder was assigned to St. Boniface Parish in

Stuart and St. Joseph in Atkinson.

Fr. Weeder primarily served at the Atkinson-Stuart parishes for five years, although the last two years of that assignment also included Sacred Heart Parish in Boyd County, St. Patrick in O'Neill, and St. Joseph in Amelia. He was blessed during that time to develop deep friendships and relationships with the people there.

A new chapter began for him when in April of 2021, Fr. Weeder

BIRTHS

Mackenzie (Einfalt) '12 & Tyler Eisenmann, daughter, Joelle Elyce, DOB 4/29/21

Whitney (Uhing) '10 & Alex Stieren '11, son, Reid Alexander, DOB 6/2/21

Katie (Ortmeier) '09 & Adam Christiansen, daughter, Parker JuliAnn, DOB 6/22/21

Mikayla (Klitz) '05 & Jess Gaver, daughter, Joni Elizabeth, DOB 6/23/21

Tim '99 & Elsa Otte, daughter, Bernadette Marie, DOB 7/2/21

Kirsten (Klitz) '11 & Logan Owens, son, Casey Keith, DOB 7/7/21

Sara (Hunke) '13 & Stephen Havlovec, daughter, Savannah Rose, DOB 7/11/21

Zach '02 & Wendy Ridder, son, Jed William, DOB 7/29/21

Emily (Guenther) '10 & Brandon Motis, daughter, Mckenna Lucille, DOB 8/20/21

Whitney (Wietfeld) '09 & Spencer Mumma, daughter, Rowyn James, DOB 8/26/21

Jacob '11 & Sarah Rolf, son, Jonathan Christopher, DOB 9/2/21

Katie (Ridder) '08 & Jacob Neujahr, daughter, Lexi Lynn, 9/2/21

Brett '01 & Britney (Stratman) '06 Kaup, daughter, Bristol Rose, DOB 9/17/21

DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD
Connie (Wendt) Hoetfelker '62 DOD 2/13/21

Vicky Wagner '69 DOD 6/27/21

LaVerne (Marksmeier) Wiese '49 DOD 7/11/21

James Michaelis '58 DOD 7/31/21

Virgil Schlautman '50 DOD 8/4/21

Albert Oligmueller '42 DOD 8/10/21

Adolph Kreikemeier Jr '55 DOD 8/5/21

Dennis Reichlinger '50 DOD 10/17/21
Marcella (Rolf) Eikmeier '48 DOD 11/1/21

John Hassler '50 DOD 11/7/21

WEDDINGS

Tanner Hass '16 married Brooklyn Malchow on 8/7/21

Kora Dorcey '16 married Dylan Higgins on 9/18/21

Jamie Petz '15 married Parker Hughes on 10/9/21

GACC searching for new high school principal

Guardian Angels Central Catholic is in search of a high school principal. For the past eight years, Kate Hagemann has filled the position with a heart of service for her alma mater.

A 2000 graduate of GACC, Hagemann returned to the nest in 2013 to teach Social Sciences at the junior high level. When a need for a principal arose the next year, Hagemann stepped into the position and has provided the school with leadership, a concern for academic success, and a love for students.

Kate would like to return to the classroom full time next year.

If interested, or know anyone who would be interested in Leading Through Christ as high school principal at GACC. Please see more information and application process on the NDE Teach in Nebraska website at <https://www.nebraska-educationjobs.ne.gov/jobs/guardian-angels-central-catholic-elementary/7-12-principal-ad/> or lovemyschool.com.

GACC is also hiring a 5th grade teacher for 2022-23.

FR. WEEDER: St. Mary's Parish

FROM PAGE 1

received news that he would be assigned as pastor of St. Mary's in West Point and the rural churches of St. Anthony in St. Charles Township, St. Boniface in Monterey, and St. Aloysius in Aloys.

Since beginning his new assignment in July, Fr. Weeder has been settling into the West Point community, getting to know the families, teachers, students, parishioners and community members.

An avid sports player in high school, Fr. Weeder's hobbies include running and playing golf, even enjoying a few rounds this summer at the Indian Trails Golf Course in Beemer.

Still close with his family and with ties to the farm, Fr. Weeder occasionally takes time off to go back home and help with harvest or other

farm-related tasks.

Learning about his affinity for farming, his parishioners have offered to let him drive their tractors, which he might take them up on.

On his move to West Point Fr. Weeder noted, "It's been really great so far. I had a lot of really great friendships in Atkinson, but coming here, everybody has been very welcoming and gracious."

He also notes that working alongside fellow associate pastor Fr. Matt Niggemeyer and the staff, who know the ropes, have helped make for a smooth transition into his role.

Currently working on learning more faces and names in the community Fr. Weeder said, "I'm enjoying getting to know people. And as their pastor, my mission is to shepherd and walk with them in their relationship with Christ."

Sobotka makes Forbes Next 1000 list

Renee (Emanuel) Sobotka, a 1998 graduate of Central Catholic High School, is honored to be recognized among the 2021 Forbes Next 1000, an annual initiative which highlights standout entrepreneurs across the United States.

Renee is the Founder and CEO of True North Technologies, a digital marketing firm based in Lincoln, which offers custom websites, mobile apps, branding, SEO, content writing, and social media management for small- to medium-sized businesses.

The Forbes Next 1000 list began in 2020. This list is open to all U.S. small business founders and owners so long as they have been operating for a minimum of one year with a maximum of \$10M in annual revenue or Series A funding.

Once per quarter, 250 names are announced across all Forbes platforms, culminating in 1000 honorees selected from all eight regions of the U.S.

Renee grew up in West Point, a town with a strong local business presence. Her family owned small businesses: a farm, pharmacy, party rentals, automotive parts, lumberyard, and general contractor.

Being raised by entrepreneurial parents, she has always been inspired to own her own business.

Not knowing exactly what type of company she wanted to own, Renee earned a finance degree



from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Upon graduating, she went on to become a Supervisor of Internal Audit for Union Pacific Railroad, and continued gaining over 15 years of financial reporting and accounting experience in the banking industry.

Throughout her career, Renee was given numerous opportunities to learn and implement innovative software systems and was able to witness how these technologies propelled companies to their next stage of growth.

True North Technologies shifts businesses into the digital age by creating engaging, affordable websites and mobile apps that connect them directly with consumers.

The business also offers additional cutting-edge digital market-

ing services such as Branding, TapOnIt, Content Writing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and Social Media Management.

Renee's goal is to continue to grow and develop True North Technologies and its employees while providing exceptional digital marketing services to their amazing clients.

Currently located in Southeast Community College's Focus Suites, she hopes to find True North its own space in the near future and add additional cutting-edge products and services along the way.

Renee aims to ride this wave of support and enthusiasm to become even more successful while inspiring others to find and follow their own True North.

Her employees take pride in their work, and this news has made them even more motivated to go above and beyond expectations for themselves and their clients.

Renee said she feels incredibly humbled to be recognized for sacrificing and putting in the hard work day-after-day for two years.

She recalls that someone once told her, "No business owner ever has two good days in a row," which makes this moment that much more exciting.

Renee dedicates her success to her parents, as they instilled great morals of faith, generosity, and work ethic.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Attention: Next year's
Alumni Banquet
will be held June 4, 2022**

Note: JayFest will be held June 3, 2022



Alumni, friends close out D1 careers

The bond that Hannah Hunke and Lauren Wobken share with each other runs deep. As best friends at a young age to Division I athletes, their journey to success has been based on hard work and dedication.

Hunke and Wobken became best friends when the two were five-years-old. They had a ton in common. A love for sports. A passion to compete. And both were destined for greatness.

The two friends grew up in small towns; Hunke in Snyder and Wobken in Scribner. There, they gained some key small-town values.

Those core values, virtues and lessons have remained with Lauren and Hannah every step of the way. Another common thread the two share is family. Hunke and Wobken come from family-oriented households. Parents, and siblings, who were devoted to helping them succeed. That support was constant.

And while their parents were crucial in laying a foundation to build upon, it was up to both Hannah and Lauren to carve their own path.

For Wobken, that path required a ton of hard work. Her motivation and competitive spirit was always on display. And it's what Lauren did off the field that made her so great.

"I always take pride in all I do. I always try my hardest, give 100 percent and never cut any corners," Wobken said.

Wobken's love for softball has always been there.

"When I was born, I was born into a softball family. My mom coached softball. My dad coached baseball," Wobken said. "I was always at the ball fields."

Wobken loved all sports. She loved to compete in each sport she played. But softball was definitely a passion. When Lauren was about 13 or 14 years old, she became serious about her quest to play college



softball.

Lauren displayed D-1 talent in high school, helping Guardian Angels Central Catholic to the Class C state title in 2017 as a sophomore. Wobken also holds three Nebraska

(Class C) state softball career records with a .521 batting average, 31 home runs and 201 hits.

With such a decorated high

See **D1 ATHLETES**, Page 5

D1 ATHLETES: Hunke, Wobken close out college careers

FROM PAGE 4

school career, Wobken's childhood dream of playing college softball came to fruition as she signed with South Dakota, a Division I college in the Summit League, where she was a four-year starter. In 196 career games, she started 176 of them.

"It was an experience like no other. You get to do so many amazing things," Wobken said. "I would have never had those experiences if it wasn't for softball."

Wobken said traveling and building relationships with teammates is something she will always cherish. Three major highlights for Wobken while playing at South Dakota was:

- Beating Michigan her sophomore season
- Playing a road game at Arizona (in a night game). The opposing pitcher had a no-hitter going until Wobken belted a homer
- Playing in the Summit League championship game her sophomore year

Another key aspect to Lauren's collegiate career were her parents, Tim and Roni.

"They never missed a game," Wobken said.

Hunke and Wobken have plenty in common. One thing for certain is both have super supportive parents.

Hannah's parents, Jeff and Missy Hunke, have been there every step of the way for their daughter.

"My parents always came to everything. They came to almost every tournament [in college]," Hunke said. "I thought it was normal, but not many of my teammates had parents there."

"My dad always took my sisters and I to the golf course. My mom would drive us everywhere. She got us to where we needed to be. My parents are truly the reason we got good at golf."

Hunke's time on a golf course began at a young age. She started playing 'ever since she could re-

member.'

There was a time growing up when Hannah did question whether golf is what she wanted to devote so much of her time to. When her friends were elsewhere, she was on the course.

That question, however, was answered in high school.

"After my freshman year of high school golf, I didn't qualify [for state]," Hunke said. "I wanted to be good at everything I did. I had to put in the time. I take pride in being good."

Once Hunke began to truly dedicate herself to the sport, her talent reached a new level. As her game improved, her love for the game grew. And naturally, golf became more fun for her.

"I enjoyed the process of becoming a good golfer. Golf is what I wanted to do," Hunke said.

After competing in three boys high school state golf tournaments (where she captured one state medal), it became undeniable that Hunke had a special talent, which paved the way to a Division I golf career.

That career came to life at University of Nebraska-Omaha. Hunke was a top-five golfer all four years of her Maverick career.

Hannah said everything really clicked at Omaha. It felt like home, she noted. Hunke said that she really created a close bond with teammates and coaches. Those relationships will never be forgotten.

Neither will many of her experiences, including her all-time favorite trip, South Carolina, where she competed on a PGA course.

Hunke credits so many different areas to her having such a successful collegiate career.

One is being from a small-town where she gained core values and lessons. Another was being a multi-sport athlete. Because of that, she truly knew what it meant to work hard and how to grind when times get tough.

Success is something that followed Hunke from high school to

college.

"We knew how to work hard [at GACC]. We knew we had to work hard all season long. Every game mattered. You went into every game wanting to win," Hunke said. "Losing wasn't normal for us. When it did happen, we knew something wasn't normal."

Having that winning mentality was a great asset when competing at the D-1 level where she was surrounded by high-level talent.

Being competitive was natural for Hunke. No matter what it was, competition fueled Hannah. Having sisters also helped with that competitive spirit.

Sisters who were fellow golfers didn't hurt either.

"We've always been there for each other," Hunke said. "We know each other's games and each other's swings. We always are helping each other out."

And, of course, having a former teammate and best friend like Wobken was essential.

"Every sport I played, Lauren was right there with me. We learned from each other, and we pushed each other to be better," Hunke said "We have always been there for each other."

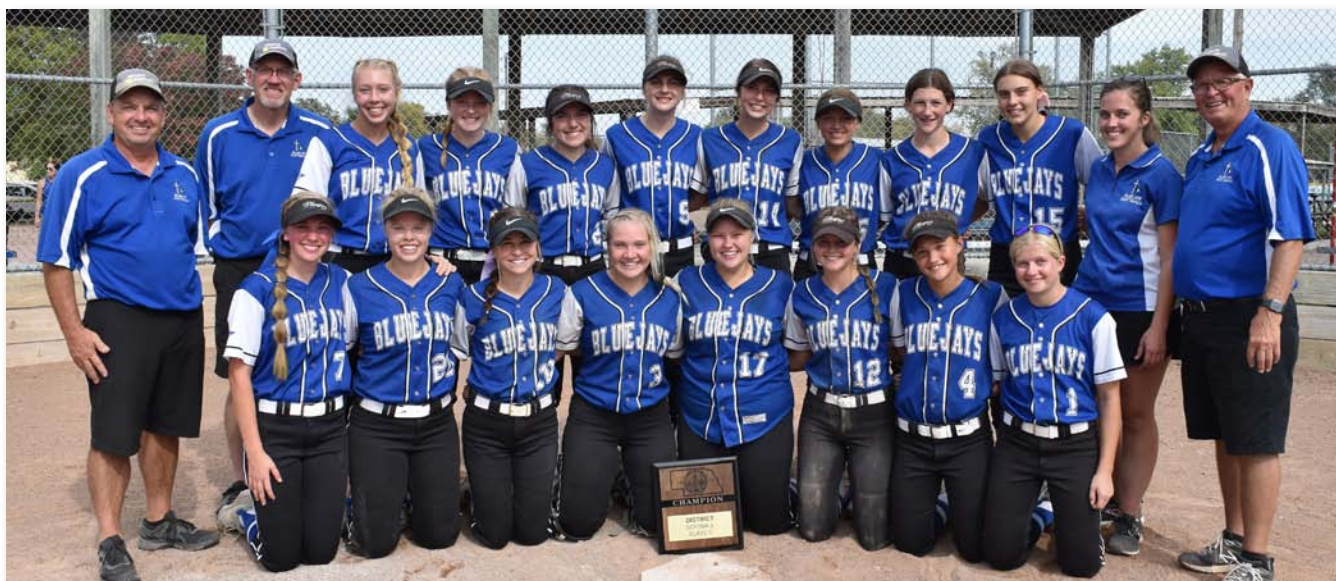
From small town girls to Division I athletes, both Hunke and Wobken carved out quite a success story for themselves.

Both have graduated and currently live in Omaha. Both will also extend their schooling.

Wobken is pursuing occupational therapy, and Hunke applied to PA school to become a physician's assistant.

Wobken and Hunke both loved their time at South Dakota and UNO, but both are excited about the next chapter in life. Still, both will cherish their time as athletes. The experiences they shared, and the doors that were opened due to athletics, were life-changing.

"If kids get the opportunity to play college sports, I would say to do it. I highly encourage it," Wobken said.



Bluejays capture 3rd place at Class C State Softball

GACC captured the District C-3 title to qualify for its 11th consecutive Class C State Softball tournament in October at Hastings. Members of the team were, from left, Emerson Ortmeier, Brynn Baumert, Kate Gnad, Aubrey Kreikemeier, Kayla Fischer, Livia Hunke, Shelby Perchal, Sydney Hutchinson; back: head coach Allan Kreikemeier, coach Jeff Pribnow, Kennedy Baumert, Adyson Luebbert, Tori Buss, Kate Jansen, Leah Jansen, Kiley Pojar, Brooklyn Steffen, Elizabeth Hasemann, coach Emily Franzluebbbers and coach Bruce Schelcht.



*GACC crowns
homecoming
king & queen*

Guardian Angels Central Catholic crowned Coy Kreikemeier and Kate Gnad as their 2021 homecoming king and queen. Other senior candidates were, from left, Kadin Pojar, Cole Hutchinson, Livia Hunke and Madison Brunsing.

Exchange student takes in new experiences

By Delores Meister

A student with an infectious smile who is thousands of miles away from her home graces the Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School halls.

Francesca Calloni is an exchange student from a public scientific high school of 1000 students in Merano, Italy, a city of 40,000 people near the northern border of Italy and Austria.

Francesca said, "All exchange students have a preparation. We are taught there is not a right way, not a wrong way, just a different way, and we have the opportunity to learn.

"Our high school prepares you to attend scientific college. Another high school will prepare you for professions. I was 13 when I chose the scientific high school to prepare to go to a scientific college. It depends upon where your interests are. You have a choice.

"It's better to know your interests and your vocation at the younger age so you can prepare for it. Our schools have five years of elementary, a middle school and then five years of high school. I am in my 4th year of high school.

"We play no sports at school but



Francesca Calloni, an exchange student from Italy, will return home after her school year at GACC.

we have sports clubs. I played in a volleyball club and I played volleyball on the GACC team," she said.

Cheerleading was something really new to Francesca. Not only did she try it, she really enjoyed it. "I can tell my children I was a cheerleader," she said.

"I live in the mountains where there is a lot of snow. It's cold but not as cold as here. We do a lot of skiing in winter," she added.

Francesca wanted to come to America.

"I wanted to learn something. My mother believed language would be important in my future life. I started to learn English in first grade when I was six years old.

"I wanted to learn the culture. I watched a lot of American movies. I expected to see big cities and lots of people. I was surprised at the community at West Point and the great people. This is different from what I anticipated from American movies.

"My favorite American food is beef. My favorite Italian food is gnocchi, a pasta made with mashed potatoes. We found an Omaha restaurant that has it."

Francesca will spend the school year at GACC and return to her Italian home when school adjourns in May.

NOW AVAILABLE!

Alumni Directory:



- The Guardian Angels Central Catholic Alumni Directory is up and running. The link is: <https://sites.google.com/a/gaccbluejays.org/gacc-alumni/>

- The GACC Alumni Directory features classes from 1921 to 2021. There is a link to each class that can be clicked on and viewed.

- Please email deannewienieke@yahoo.com to report any errors or omissions.

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