



CHRIST CHILD SOCIETY
OF SOUTH BEND
WHERE LOVE LEADS TO ACTION

2366 Miracle Lane
Mishawaka, IN 46545
574 288 6028
info@christchildsb.org
Spring 2026

Calendar

May

- 12 Trial Volunteer Day 5:30-7:00 PM
- 13 **DIAPER DROP**
- 18 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM
- 27 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower Church 8:30 AM
- 30 Trial Volunteer Day 9:30-11:30 AM

June

- 9 Trial Volunteer Day 5:30-7:00 PM
- 15 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM
- 24 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower Church 8:30 AM
- 27 Trial Volunteer Day, 9:30-11:30 AM

July

- 1-5 **CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY**
- 20 Board Meeting - Desmond Conference Room 10:00 AM
- 23 In Memoriam Mass - Little Flower 8:30 AM

Center is open for volunteers every Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:00 to 1:00.

Nothing is too much to do for a child.

Diaper Drop Returns for 7th Year

The 7th annual Diaper Drop will be held on May 13, 2026 from 9:00 AM-2:00 PM at the Christ Child Clothing Center.

This year The Christ Child Society will be collecting diapers for 10 agencies: The Center for the Homeless, La Casa de Amistad, YWCA, El Campito, E. Blair Warner Family Practice Center, The Salvation Army Kroc Center, Hannah's House, Northeast Neighborhood Food Pantry, St. Margaret's House, and St. Vincent de Paul, as well as CCS's Foster Hope Program. Many of the agencies are asking for the larger sizes 3, 4, 5, 6 but there is always a need for smaller sizes.



Donors are welcome to bring diapers prior to or on May 13 to the Clothing Center. Anyone wishing to volunteer please contact Cheryl Stuckey – 574-340-0365 or Karen Van Meter at 574-520-2922.



Pictures are from Diaper Drop 2025.

CCS is Trying Something New: Opening the Center Doors on Evenings & Weekends to Volunteers and Members

Many dedicated members and volunteers have busy daytime schedules so, to better support the community, a trial period for evening and weekend hours at Christ Child will commence. During these experimental shifts, it will be determined if the additional hours are a good fit for volunteer schedules.

For the next few months, besides the usual hours on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, the Center will be open during the following times:

2nd Tuesday of the Month: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Last Saturday of the Month: 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Upcoming Dates are: Sat 4/25, Tues 5/12, Sat 5/30, Tues 6/9, & Sat 6/27

Why a Trial?

The goal is to ensure volunteer hours are available when you are. If the turnout is sufficient, these hours will become a permanent part of the calendar.

Ready to pitch in? Just show up during these times or email info@christchildsb.org with questions. Hopefully some new (and familiar) faces will appear in the evenings and on Saturday mornings.

Spring is Busy at the Clothing Center

Carolyn Sherman
Co-President

Spring is here, it seems (we hope!). Even though we do not have clients at this time, we are very busy preparing for them. Our doors will open again on August 5, and there is much to be done before then. Our buyers are busy placing orders and going to sales in stores throughout the area. Volunteers come in every Tuesday and Wednesday to sort and bundle new socks and underwear; sort and inventory new clothing items by size; add donated crocheted baby blankets to layette bags; stock new shoes and new and used boots; color-coordinate hats and gloves with new coats and hang them by size and gender; and arrange books by age and category. All items will be ready to serve clients when we open in August!

The loading dock and used clothing areas are filled with donated items that need to be sorted, sometimes needing washing or minor repairs before opening day. Since Foster Hope totes and Layettees are distributed throughout the year, items related to those specific needs are gathered and organized continually. In addition, chairpersons and volunteers involved in the annual Information Coffees in April, Diaper Drop in May, and *Let Love Shine* in November are busy preparing for those important events.

With all this activity, we are so grateful to all our volunteers who make everything go together for the benefit of the children we serve.

President Elect for 2026-27, Karen Van Meter

Karen Van Meter, a lifetime resident of South Bend, is looking forward to serving as President at The Christ Child Society. Karen has been around Christ Child for many years. Her grandfather made wood toys and her grandmother made Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls for the Red Wagon Bazaar.

Her mother, Lois Leliaert, who knitted many, many baby sweaters for the Layette Department, also served as a president in the 80's, shocking members when she loaded a few ladies in her car, drove them to Chicago, and bought children's coats. Karen gets her independence honestly!

Karen has been married to Tom

for 56 years, and together they have three children and seven grandchildren. Her daughter, Colleen Toul, is also active in Christ Child and serves on the board.

Karen is a lifetime educator, beginning her career at Holy Cross Grade School and eventually became principal for 5 years. She continued her career at Saint Mary's College as she became the Director of Student Teaching and Field Study in the Education Department.

Karen enjoys knitting and quilting and spending time with her husband, children and grands. She is looking forward to continuing on the Registration "posse" and helping to lead Christ Child into its 80th year.



2025-26 Executive Board

Co-Presidents
Vickie Sleevi & Carolyn Sherman
President Elect
Karen Van Meter
Vice President (Fundraising)
Ellen Jessen
Vice President (Membership)
Tricia Shafer
Vice President (Clothing)
Sherry North
Vice President
(Communications)
Mary Hazel
Board Secretary
Cheryl Stuckey
Treasurer
Sue Alwine

Thank you to the retiring board members for your dedication and service to The Christ Child Society.



Mary Hazel
Mary Liddell
Sherry North
Tricia Shafer

And a special thanks to **Vickie Sleevi** for serving as Co-President for 2024-2026.

New Board Members Approved for 2026-27

During the March board meeting, nominations were accepted for the 2026-27 board. The slate of board members was approved by the membership at the Spring Luncheon and Meeting. Joining the board are Trish Coleman, Diane Fox, Cindy Krupp, Laura Rieff and Susan Richter.

Trish Coleman and her husband, Chip, met when they were both students at Notre Dame. They have lived in South Bend since getting married 50 years ago. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. She gets to see 3 of the grands regularly since they live nearby. Trish worked for the St. Joseph County Public Library, first as a reference librarian and then as an administrator, for a total of 35 years.

When she retired in Fall of 2022, she looked for places to volunteer so she could continue to help the community. When she found The Christ Child Society, Trish knew it was a good fit and she started volunteering in Used Clothing in 2023. She really enjoys her Wednesday mornings with all her new friends there. Even though her husband has recently retired and they plan on traveling more, Trish is looking forward to continuing her work at the center and helping the board any way that she can.

Diane Fox is a lifelong resident of South Bend - and happily so. She began her career at Saint Joe High

School and concluded it at Saint Mary's College, and Diane loved every minute of it. She has been retired for 3 years this May, and she is keeping very busy.

Diane takes classes at Forever Learning Institute, works out 4 days a week at Strong Hold, and now is heavily involved in another season of planting and caring for flowers and vegetables. She also voluntarily tutors high school and college students so she can get "her fix of working with kids" and continue her sense of purpose. This really came to fruition, though, when she got involved (at the urging of many good friends) with Christ Child Society. She loves working with clients during Intake season, and she has renewed many friendships which she finds endearing. She is happy to serve Christ Child by becoming a board member and looks forward to the opportunity to help those in need.

Cindy Krupp has been a member of CCS since 2002. She has worked in many departments. A professional nurse with a background of service in the Air Force, Cindy brings a wealth of experience and compassion to everything she does. Outside of her professional life and service, she enjoys volunteering at her home parish, hospice and local community of South Haven, MI. Cindy is a legacy board member; her mother Mary Lou Houle was a long time member.

Laura Reiff and her husband, Craig, have been married for 44 years and have two adult children, Ryan and Lauren. Laura retired from the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame in 2023.

Last year, Laura volunteered in the Intake Room and helped with the *Let Love Shine* event. Laura is looking forward to serving on the board and continuing to work with the great team at Christ Child in support of its mission.

Susan Richter and husband, Patric, have been married for 44 years and have two sons, Ryan and Matthew, and one grandson. They are parishioners at Saint Joseph, South Bend. They have lived in South Bend since 1992. Susan has served Catholic education as a teacher and administrator for 40 years, retiring in 2023.

A member of Christ Child for the past year, Susan has been working primarily with the Intake group and also helps with layettes and socks. She looks forward to working with the board to advance the wonderful and important mission of Christ Child.

Susan and Pat enjoy walking the lakes at ND and traveling to Berry College in Rome, GA, to support son, Matthew, and his Men's Basketball team. Susan enjoys taking care of her perennial gardens and babysitting for their grandson, Hendrix.



Left to right: New board members Laura Rieff, Cindy Krupp, Diane Fox, Susan Richter.



Trish Coleman, new board member

Spring Luncheon Is a St. Patrick's Day Treat

On a wintery St. Patrick's Day, the Christ Child Society gathered for the annual Spring Mass, Luncheon and Meeting. Lovely decorations and good spirits made the day cheerful. Chair Sara Conroy created a festive Irish celebration and many guests sported green outfits.

Mass was held at St. Thérèse Little Flower Church. It was concelebrated by Bishop Kevin Rhoades and Fr.



Julius Okojie, Pastor. Following tradition, members brought donated layette items to the altar at the Offertory. Once again, Betsie Pendarvis expertly planned the liturgy and led choir members Vickie Sleevei, Carolyn Sherman and Chris Reilly.

The luncheon at Morris Park Country Club featured tomato bisque soup and a spring salad with chicken breast. A wonderful dessert bar that was the hit of the day. During the business meeting that followed lunch, attendees welcomed President Elect Karen Van Meter and the chapter's five new board members.



Top Left: Vickie Sleevei bows her head as Bishop Rhoades says Grace before lunch. Middle Left: Bishop Rhoades and Fr. Okojie celebrate Mass. Bottom Left: The crowd enjoys a delicious meal. Above: Jackie Hoover selects her favorite desserts. Below: Jane Reed, Barb Reihl, Barb Mickow, Sue Seall and Karen Kubsch enjoyed their salads. Bottom Right: Catching up with friends is the best part of the Spring Luncheon.



Rotary Award Benefits Children Served by CCS

On Wednesday, February 18, the Christ Child Society of South Bend received the President's Award of \$15,000 from the Rotary of South Bend.

Tina Patton, the current President of Rotary, chose the Christ Child Society as the recipient of this year's Award. The President's Award, given by the President of the South Bend Rotary Club each year, is a \$15,000 gift to an organization which embodies the "Service above Self" ideal of Rotarians. In conjunction with this

monetary gift, the South Bend Rotary Club is also running a club-wide giving campaign to support the work of the Christ Child Society and build awareness of the needs experienced by local children and families.

Tina was highlighted in the 2025 *Let Love Shine* video that captured The Christ Child Society's contributions to and relationship with the local community. CCS is grateful to Tina and the Rotary Club of South Bend for this gift. These funds will provide many new clothes, coats, and shoes

for the children who are served by the CCS Clothing Program.

"The Christ Child Society ensures that children in our area are not only better protected from the cold, but through these gifts of warm clothing they are reminded that their community believes in them and cares about their well-being," said Tina. "Our goal is to make this one of the most impactful and joyful service efforts of the year."



Left to Right: Susan Wendowski, Carolyn Sherman, Vickie Sleeve, Tina Patton, President of Rotary, Susan Coulter and John Farrell, a member of Rotary and CCS.

Volunteers Package Layettes of Hope

A crew of dedicated Christ Child volunteers prepared Layettes of Hope every Wednesday during the month of March. These newborn-size bodysuits are given to women who receive a positive pregnancy test at the three Women's Care Centers in St. Joseph County.

The volunteers open the packages of these little clothes, cut the plastic tabs off them, fold them, and insert them in the little baggies which have a CCS seal on them. They add a small card that lets Moms know CCS is

thinking of them as they prepare for this precious life.

Each year, 4,000 Layettes of Hope are requested. Over the past two years, increasing costs have made it difficult to meet this demand. As a result, Christ Child will order and distribute fewer Layettes this year.



Vickie Sleeve and Carolyn Sherman present a CCS Della Robbia necklace.

Day of Reflection a Lenten Tradition

Thirtyfive women attended the Day of Reflection on February 25 at the Ackles Family Life Center at St. Joseph Parish, South Bend. Reverend Peter D. Rocca, CSC led reflections on the message of Pope Leo for the Lenten season.

Following Father's reflections and several readings, the participants gathered in small groups to talk about listening and fasting - not just from food, but also from material possessions and leisure activities.

Reflections were followed by Mass in the Church and lunch at the Ackles Center. It was the perfect morning to share fellowship and deepen the Lenten journey.

Many thanks to St. Joseph Parish for hosting the event, to Yellow Cat Cafe for catering a delicious lunch, to Sue Alwine for arranging lunch, and to Judy Kuzmich for organizing breakfast and providing baked goods, assisted by Linda Wray.

Double the Coffee, Double the Interest

The Information Coffee, a long-time tradition of The Christ Child Society, is an annual opportunity for potential members and volunteers to learn about the organization. This year, an evening event was added to accommodate people with busy schedules. Guests are invited by friends and family and through parish bulletins, social media and community events.

On April 22, 24 guests toured the Center and were treated to snapshot descriptions of each department. Presenters Melissa Baltz, Vickie Sleevi, Joan Hardig, Karen Van Meter and Carolyn Sherman spoke about the history, programs and mission of CCS.

Guests enjoyed delicious treats prepared by Judy Kuzmich with the assistance of Tracy Hahn and Patti Banet.

The following evening, a second session brought 10 guests for a replay of the first get-together.

Both sessions were enjoyed by the guests, the members who volunteered as guides, and those who attended with their guests.



Community Volunteers Boost CCS Mission

"Lord, as you have given yourself to me, so I give myself to you and to my brothers and sisters. May I be committed in act and not just in thought, so that my commitment might be real."

Kenneth E. Grabner, C.S.C.

The months of January through April have seen an abundance of volunteers from around the Community helping Christ Child Society with the job of restocking departments for our opening in August. High school students, junior high students, members of Christ Child and a variety of volunteers from local colleges and businesses have helped us restock our shelves.

A special thank you goes to the following organizations: Notre Dame Research and the College of Science, Notre Dame students who were part of "Back the Bend", Bethel University students, students from Penn High School's National Honor Society, employees of Holladay Hospitality, and new members who want to be a part of an organization that gives "time, treasure, and prayers" for the needs in our community.

The many volunteers make the job of helping others one of joy and fulfillment for those in our community who have so many needs.



Above Left: Guests of the Morning Information Coffee learn about CCS programs. Top: During the evening session, Joan Hardig shares the story of The Christ Child Society's founding and history. Above Center: Anne Choinacky explains the Layette Program and shows the items in each tote bag. Above: Mary Ann Chandler shows off one of the cute coats CCS gives to children each year.



Above: Visitors from Notre Dame Research and the College of Science tackled hundreds of sock packages, bundling them for distribution to children. Right: Employees of Holladay Hospitality came to CCS in April to lend a hand with re-packaging socks and sorting clothing items.

