

Getting To Know.... Amy & Rob Fischer

Written by Vic Gideon

"The building is so beautiful, so impressive, and people are drawn to the building," Rob Fischer remembers about seeing St. Ann Church when he and his wife Amy moved to Cleveland Heights in 2001. "So how do you make the space inside not feel like a museum?"

The Fischers have worked hard to bring life to the buildings at Communion of Saints since moving from Atlanta when Rob took a job as a Professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

Initially, the Fischers thought about joining Gesu since it seemed more similar to their parish in Atlanta but eventually realized they had made the right choice.

"As soon as your kids are enrolled at the school, it opens up a whole new possibility of ways to connect with other families," Rob remembers.

The Fischers sent their three boys to St. Ann/Communion of Saints School with all three graduating from Benedictine High School.

Desmond, 24, works in Cincinnati for a sport-focused nonprofit after graduating from Xavier University in 2022, Bailey, 21, is a senior at the College of Wooster majoring in Urban Studies, and Eamon, 19, works at a ski resort in Salt Lake City.

Rob, who grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, graduated from Duke University with a BA in Public Policy and Religion and then earned his PhD in Policy Development Program Evaluation from Vanderbilt University before coming to CWRU. Amy, a native of Humboldt, Tennessee, graduated from University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a BA in History. The two met in Tennessee in 1991 and got married in 1993 at Christ the King in Nashville.

"I'm a convert," Amy says about growing up Methodist but eventually finding comfort in the Catholic Church. "The ritual of it, it's the same everywhere you go."

Amy, who currently works as a preschool teacher at the Music Settlement, also serves as the Marriage Coordinator at Communion of Saints.

"I feel like it's a way to capture couples when they start their journeys," she says. "I feel like if they have a good feeling about where they got married, then they're more likely to join."

"We're not a venue," Rob adds. "We are a community that's welcoming them for a very important sacrament."

Rob, active in the Knights of Columbus, just stepped down as Grand Knight for Windemere Council 2726 after five years.

"I think there are a lot of important groups in a parish community," Rob says. "But the Knights of Columbus represents a way to engage men who are often not well-engaged but need to be more engaged in their faith and serving the community at large."

Both continue their efforts to make Communion of Saints more than just a beautiful building.

"It's not just once a week that you see each other, we see each other during the week,"

Rob says of the Knights and other groups at the parish. "You're building those connections."

When they joined, among their other initiatives, they pushed to revive Families with Young Children, dormant for 20 years before it restarted in 2003.

"Being part of a Catholic community, the church was central to where you lived, where you socialized," Amy recalls, remembering the former importance of parishes in the lives of families and the couple's continuing work at Communion of Saints to recapture that vitality.

"Father Anthony has really extended his hand to finding people to step forward and get involved in a lot of different ways," says Rob. "Ultimately, it's dependent on the people to make this community thrive like it has at so many times in its history."

"As a product of a merger, we still need to figure out what our future looks like with two well-functioning sites," he continues. "The opportunities are great and we have great families in our parish."

