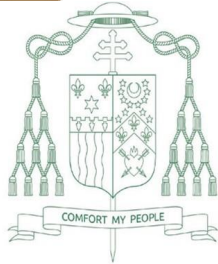




The Crossroads Messenger

The official newsletter of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church • Mount Washington, Kentucky

Spring 2025



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

Pastoral Center, 3940 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40213-1463
(502) 585-3291 | (502) 585-2466 (Fax) | archbp@archlou.org

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I extend a heartfelt invitation to all members of Saint Francis Xavier Parish in Mount Washington to join me in offering prayerful congratulations to the Reverend Robert Dale Cieslik as he embarks on his retirement. We gather in gratitude for the invaluable gift of his ministry, which has spanned over four decades, profoundly touching the lives of many within the Archdiocese of Louisville. His dedication as a priest and pastor has left an enduring impact on our community, and we celebrate this significant milestone in his life.

Father Cieslik has devoted many years to nurturing a profound love for the Lord, embodying the spirit of a missionary disciple with unwavering zeal. His commitment to faith, fidelity, and charity has driven him to tirelessly serve the spiritual needs of souls and to advance the Kingdom of God in Central Kentucky. In addition to pastoring the parochial communities of Saint Pius X, Saint Leonard, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Saint Francis Xavier, Father Cieslik also served as archdiocesan chancellor and archivist. As archivist, Father Cieslik took great pride in safeguarding our Catholic heritage, ensuring its preservation for future generations. His dedication has significantly enriched the archdiocese through his contributions to parishes, schools, and various agencies, all fueled by his deep love for Jesus Christ.

It has been a true privilege to collaborate with him, and I am thankful for the invaluable guidance he has offered throughout my tenure as Archbishop. On behalf of our entire local Church, I wish Father Cieslik all the best as he embarks on this new chapter of his ministry. May his retirement be abundant in peace, joy, and fulfillment.

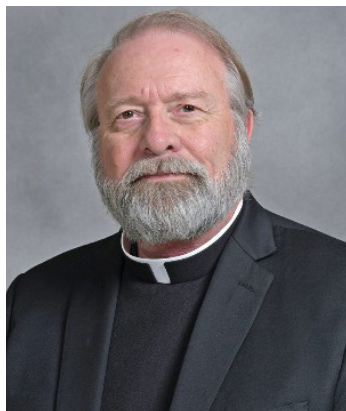
Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville

Read More
Fr. Dale Tributes

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Reflections On The Holy Year of 2025



Spring has sprung and I think all of us are ready to celebrate many accomplishments, including among them are First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, Graduations and anything social! All these events are not pre-packaged for us. There is *much* planning and preparation that has been ongoing for months

and years. And so here we are, celebrating once again, the greatest gift of all... Lasting Life in the Resurrected Jesus and good Pope Francis' return to heaven. Through eyes of faith, we are focused on exactly what needs to be said, done and celebrated at home and elsewhere.

This will be the last article I prepare as pastor for The Cross Roads Messenger. I was asked by the current editor to reflect on my 13 years at Saint Francis Xavier Parish in today's issue. I consider that a very tall task. So much has been lived in these past years and I find it daunting to summarize ministry with the great people of this community in just a few, short written words. But given the challenge, I will try to highlight those things I feel are very worthwhile for me in parish life.

A tendency to summarize a lifetime of ministry would be to make a list of programs and facility accomplishments. While I am so pleased with the fete of the planning and building of **The Xavier Center**, I am drawn to focus on the *day-to-day* spiritual works that I have shared with each of you in this parish. Yes, I am so grateful for all that has been built, refreshed and expanded upon in my tenure, but just as proud of those with whom I have celebrated the Sacraments over and over and over since June of 2012... and this includes All Saints Parish for whom I was pastor for the first five years, too. Jesus leads us together to find and enjoy Him in all activities, seen and unseen, especially all the Celebrations that involve the theme of Resurrection that we together have had... not only in all the funerals but the challenges we conquered in the COVID era. Those

were tough days... days we met head on.

I think of my colleagues with whom I shared parish ministry at SFX and All Saints Churches and are now with God. Among them are Nancy Almony (Secretary), Margee Joseph (Pastoral Associate) and Father Jack Caldwell (Friend and Substitute) ... all warm, friendly and fun people who shared Catholic vision while having health issues as did/do other staff members in my tenure. I think of the past 13 years and am equally grateful for former staff members: (alphabetically listed) Monique Becker, Billy Blake, Nicole Casteel, Lisa Downs, Darlene Fowler, Helen Hagan, Jerry Mudd, Joe Recktenwald, Dave Richardson of the SFX Community and Diane Black, Becky Culver, Laura Zoeller of All Saints Parish; to Deacons Steve Age, Carl Fahringer, Gerry Mattingly and Pete Rendon. To all of them, and some short termers, I owe great debt. And **today's parish staff** with whom it continues to be a great pleasure in practicing The Holy Gospels of Jesus. How blest can a priest-pastor be?

Most of all, I am so grateful for YOU who are active in our Catholic faith... those who did not *run* when called upon for any ministry... those who live their stewardship in time, talent and treasure. Those are not empty words... those characteristics are what we ALL are called to do as a baptized person ... and to do them all well... not just well enough.

I am not sure how I will adapt to "retirement" because, as priest, I never finish. However, as a pastor, I hope to assist my brother priests and deacons in their Sacramental responsibilities and opportunities. Also, I will happily continue to embrace the work of my lifelong love, our local Catholic church history!

Saint Francis Xavier, pray for me!

In Christ the Cornerstone,

Fr. Dale



The Crossroads Messenger

Summer 2025



St. Francis Xavier

155 Stringer Lane
Mount Washington, KY 40047
502.538.4933 - or - 502.955.5366

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

www.sfxmw.com



Earl Baker

Deacon's Desk

Pope Francis

1936-2025

A Humble, Compassionate and Joyful Servant to God's People



Andrew Medichini/AP

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, was a living sign of the Gospel in our time. From the very beginning of his papacy in 2013, when he humbly asked the people to pray for him before imparting his first Apostolic Blessing, it was clear that this would be a different kind of papacy—one rooted deeply in simplicity, mercy, and a profound closeness to the people of God.

One of the defining marks of Pope Francis's life and ministry was his unwavering concern for the poor, the marginalized, and the forgotten. He called the Church to be a "field hospital" after battle, where wounds are tended with tenderness and compassion. His encyclicals, such as *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'*, are not just doctrinal texts, but heartfelt calls to care for both the material and spiritual needs of the vulnerable—whether it be the hungry, the homeless, the migrant, or even the planet itself. He reminded us that the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are deeply interconnected.

Francis continually emphasized a "culture of encounter," encouraging Catholics not to remain within the walls of the Church, but to go out to the peripheries—to listen, to serve, and to accompany. His actions spoke as powerfully as his words: from washing the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursday to embracing the disabled and welcoming refugees, he embodied the radical love of Christ.

As a "pope for the people," Francis has dismantled much of the distance that existed between the papacy and the faithful. He had chosen to live in the simple Vatican guesthouse rather than the ornate papal apartments, and he preferred personal interaction over protocol. His papacy was a daily reminder that leadership in the Church is not about power, but about service. In doing so, he lived out Christ's own words: "The greatest among you must be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

Pope Francis challenged us to examine our own lives: Are we truly walking with the poor? Are we listening to those who have been silenced? Are we building a Church that reflects the mercy and joy of the Gospel? His life was a prophetic witness to what it means to be a disciple in the modern world.

As we reflect on the legacy of Pope Francis, may we be inspired to follow his example of humility, compassion, and joyful service. May we become, like him, instruments of God's mercy in a world that thirsts for love and justice.



5.2.2015

Pope Francis' Homily: The Church Should Be Like A Field Hospital

Find the full video at romereports.com

Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images

During Pope Francis I homily at Casa Santa Marta, he spoke about the mission of the Church, but moreover, talked about our role as Christians and his role as leader. He said the Church must be like a field hospital that cleans and heals wounds. As followers, we mourn the death of this great man, but Pope Francis would remind us that the tomb is empty and this is not the end. We can all gather seeds of wisdom from this homily and perhaps find a way forward on our Christian Walk. Pope Francis I's greatest legacy would be for all of us, healers and wounded, to find practical ways every day to help, listen and heal each other's wounds.

This is the mission of the Church: The Church heals, it cures. Sometimes, I speak of the Church as if it were a field hospital. It's true: there are many, many wounded! So many people need their wounds healed! This is the mission of the Church: to heal the wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives all, God is the Father, God is affectionate, God always waits for us.

It's true, we have to help and create organizations that help in this: yes, because the Lord gives us the gifts for this. But when we forget this mission, forget poverty, forget the apostolic zeal and instead, place our hope in these human means, the Church slowly slips into becoming an NGO (non-governmental organization), it becomes a beautiful organization: Powerful, but not evangelical, because it lacks that spirit, that poverty, that power to heal.

He does not say to them: How great, you are great, now on your next mission you should be better organized ... Only: 'When you have done all you have to do, say to yourself: 'We are useless servants.' This is the apostle. And what would be the most beautiful praise for an apostle?' He was a worker of the Kingdom, a worker of the Kingdom'. This is the greatest praise, because it means he has chosen Jesus' path of proclamation. He goes to heal, to safeguard, to proclaim this good news and this year of grace, so that people rediscover the Father, to foster peace in the hearts of the people.

I SEE THE CHURCH AS A FIELD HOSPITAL AFTER BATTLE. IT IS USELESS TO ASK A SERIOUSLY INJURED PERSON IF HE HAS HIGH CHOLESTEROL AND ABOUT THE LEVEL OF HIS BLOOD SUGARS. YOU HAVE TO HEAL HIS WOUNDS. THEN WE CAN TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING ELSE.

- POPE FRANCIS -



The Crossroads Messenger

Spring 2025



Lauren Battcher
VBS Coordinator

Coming Soon:

SFX VBS June 16-19



vbapro.events/p/19be29

Who is ready for an unforgettable summer adventure? SFX presents “True North” Vacation Bible School—a fun and faith-filled week designed to help

kids learn to trust Jesus as their guide in our wild, often unpredictable world.

At True North, kids will take part in exciting games, unforgettable Bible stories, amazing science experiments, and energizing music—all centered on the theme of trusting Jesus in ALL of life’s circumstances!

This year’s Vacation Bible School will take place from June 16-19 (Monday through Thursday), from 5:30-8:30 pm. Kids ages 4 through current 5th graders are invited to embark on this VBS adventure! We welcome kids from both in and

outside of our parish! The sense of supportive community at VBS encourages participants to make new friends and deepen current relationships as they explore how to trust Jesus no matter what life throws our way.

Registration is open through June 12, or until all 100 spots are filled. Use the QR code to register or to volunteer with set-up!

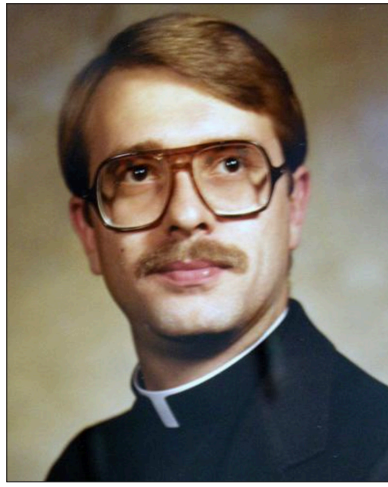


Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sarah Bischoff for being awarded the Patricia French Honorary Scholarship.

This scholarship was established and awarded for the first time in 2017 with an objective to honor Patricia K. French by recognizing and financially supporting a deserving member of the St. Francis Xavier Community with tuition assistance for college or vocational school. To qualify, students must be SFX parishioners in their senior year of high school, demonstrate a solid work ethic, and be a service-oriented person of high Christian moral values.

This year’s field of applicants were all deemed by the judges to be highly qualified and their decision was a difficult one, but Sarah Kate’s involvement at St. Francis Xavier and her plans for the future, lifted her to the top. The daughter of Ronnie and Jaime Booker, Sarah impressed the judges with her can-do attitude and self awareness. With plans to attend Murray State University, majoring in Agricultural Education, Sarah hopes to find a church community that offers the same small town parish atmosphere that she enjoys at SFX. She intends to continue answering Christ’s call to love and serve through music ministry wherever her journey takes her.



Readied For Retirement

Tributes To Father Dale



The Crossroads Messenger
Spring 2025

Notes from Archbishop Charles C. Thompson:

Robert Dale Cieslik, was born on May 2, 1955, the oldest of three children and somewhere in the middle of 46 grandchildren on his mother's side of the family. Assuming the role of a priest, "playing" Mass at a very young age, his halo shined a bit brighter than those of his siblings and cousins on both sides of the family, the Ciesliks and Thompsons. Precious to all who knew him, he was destined to serve rather than be served.



Dale graduated from Southern High School, in Louisville, where it's rumored that he taught Phil Simms how to throw a spiral in football. Dale had to forego any type of sports career, as he knew his hands

were made for chalices rather than callouses.

He later attended Bellarmine College for a short time. In seminary, he was known to many as Bobby Dale. Try as he might, he simply could not shake that Kentucky accent and demeanor. By no insignificant means of grace, divine or other, he made it through the seminary and was ordained a priest on 22 May 1982.

Fr. Dale has served in several positions throughout his 43+ years of ordained ministry—as Associate Pastor, Pastor, Sacramental Moderator, Chancellor, Archivist and Chaplain to Men's Basketball of Bellarmine University (he has the rings and plaque to prove it). While he has served in other ways, these are roles that can be mentioned in respectable company. In all seriousness, he has served in each position with tremendous compassion, dedication, passion, and selflessness. Whatever the task, his witness of priestly ministry has been truly Christ-centered in love of God and neighbor.

Not only has he evidenced a great love for Jesus Christ, but Fr. Dale has sought to lead others to a personal encounter with Him. Make no bones about it, Fr. Dale is quite clear of his role as a servant-leader who points to Jesus Christ as Savior of the world.

With such clarity, he has faithfully proclaimed the Word of God, celebrated the Sacraments of the Church, and poured out his life in Service to those

entrusted to his care. Through it all, he has maintained a wonderful spirit of joy, humor, and generosity. Many lives, souls, have been deeply impacted by Fr. Dale's priestly life and ministry. Beyond the numerous Baptisms, First Communions, Weddings, Confessions, Anointings, pastoral care, and Funerals, the full impact of Fr. Dale's ministry and service is too vast to be measured in human terms. This is known to God alone.

Where have the years gone? It seems like only yesterday that Fr. Dale, who served as ring bearer for my parents' wedding as a little blond five-year old boy with brown eyes, was being ordained a priest at age 27. Now he is retiring. May he enjoy an abundance of grace and many blessings in this next phase of his priestly life and ministry. Perhaps he might consider moving north to drive around an aging archbishop. Regardless, with assurance of continued prayer, gratitude and admiration, we wish him all the best. **Ad Multos Annos!**

A graphic with a black background. At the top, a pair of hands is shown in a prayer position, palms facing each other. Below the hands, the title "Prayer for Priests" is written in a large, yellow, cursive font. Underneath the title, "by St. Therese of Lisieux" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The main body of the text is in a white, serif font, arranged in a column. The text is a prayer for priests, asking for their protection and blessing.

Prayer for Priests
by St. Therese of Lisieux

O Jesus, eternal Priest,
keep your priests within the shelter of Your Sacred Heart,
where none may touch them.
Keep unstained their anointed hands,
which daily touch Your Sacred Body.
Keep unsullied their lips,
daily purpled with your Precious Blood.
Keep pure and unearthly their hearts,
sealed with the sublime mark of the priesthood.
Let Your holy love surround them and
shield them from the world's contagion.
Bless their labors with abundant fruit and
may the souls to whom they minister
be their joy and consolation here and in heaven
their beautiful and everlasting crown. Amen.



Paula Silliman
Pastoral Associate

Paula's Ponderings

Sweet Blessings With Fr. Dale



After working alongside Fr. Dale, it's safe to say I've learned many things—some spiritual, some practical, and some snack-related. He has been more than a priest to us; he's been our shepherd, our comic relief, our sarcasm specialist, and, most importantly, our snack dealer.

I'm still not sure what theological school teaches priests to hand out chocolates as generously as sacraments, but I'm grateful he mastered the art. And while his wit might have you thinking he moonlights as a stand-up comedian; it's his deep kindness and generosity that truly define him. He noticed the little things—like my need for gluten-free treats—and somehow always made sure they appeared. That might seem small to some, but to me, it meant the world. It meant I was seen, cared for, and thought of.

He's the kind of priest who can guide you through the mysteries of the faith in one breath and roast your coffee-making skills in the next. And somehow, you leave both conversations feeling holier.

Retirement may mean fewer homilies, but I sincerely hope it doesn't mean fewer cookie deliveries. (I'm asking for the whole office, of course.)

Fr. Dale, thank you for being a source of joy, wisdom, and laughter. Your presence made even the busiest days lighter, the hardest moments more bearable, and the quiet days a little more delicious.

May your retirement be filled with peace and adventure. You've earned it.



A Decade of Leadership, Mentorship & Friendship



Carrie Gary
Music Director

As I reflect on my time at Saint Francis Xavier, I am filled with deep gratitude for Father Dale Cieslik and the incredible impact he has had on our entire Faith Family, the SFXMW music program, and me personally. Through his guidance, I've learned so much—about my faith, my role as music director, the liturgy, and the understanding that while priests are held in high esteem and reverence, they are also human, fully capable of humor and everyday conversation. When I took on the role of music director, I was a newcomer to this kind of responsibility. Father Dale was my guide, offering advice and support as I navigated my new position.

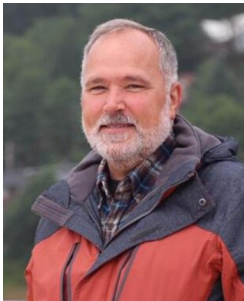
There have been countless occasions when I've turned to him for advice or reassurance, whether it was planning for special Holy Days or making decisions about our music selections, or handling difficult situations. Father Dale has always been there with his

thoughtful guidance, ensuring we stay true to the mission of the parish and the liturgy. One of the most special moments of my time with Father Dale was the opportunity to contribute to his 40th anniversary Jubilee Celebration Mass. It was an honor to select the music and instruments that he loves, creating a truly memorable and personal experience for him and the entire congregation. That moment remains one of the highlights of my tenure.

One thing that has always stood out to me about Father Dale is his engaging and insightful homilies. His ability to weave in practical examples and offer spiritual guidance has always resonated with me—and with so many others in the parish. Father Dale's homilies are never just a sermon; they are an opportunity for growth and reflection, allowing us to deepen our understanding of our faith. And of course, there's the signature humor that Father Dale brings to Mass. His jokes (mostly) never fail to bring lightness to our hearts as

we leave the church. His ability to combine humor with reverence is a rare gift.

Father Dale embodies what it means to be a priest; he is a compassionate and thoughtful leader who cares for his staff and parishioners. He is quick to send a card for every illness, birthday, loss, or occasion of congratulations. As he approaches his retirement, I have asked him on more than one occasion if he is sure he wants to retire, his response is always a resounding "Yes." While I will miss his guidance and presence (and his looks from across the altar, both questioning and affirming), I know that his retirement is well-deserved. Father Dale's legacy at Saint Francis Xavier will live on in the hearts of those who have had the privilege of working with him, worshiping with him, and for me in the music that continues to inspire our Faith Family. Thank you, Father Dale, for all that you have done for the parish, for me, and for the countless lives you've touched throughout your ministry.



Mitchell Elder
Parishioner

Father Dale, where to start?

As I look back over the last 13 years of Father Dale's time here at Saint Francis Xavier, he has not only been our Priest but more so our Pastor, meaning shepherd. In my opinion Father Dale is the G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time) of Pastors. I say this because I have watched in amazement how he is so involved in every aspect, meeting and function that happens at SFX. At times I have wondered how it was humanly possible to make every meeting and function not only at SFX but at All Saints parish as well, but he did. Especially during the time of building the Xavier

Center and renovating the Parish Hall. It was insane how many meetings and decisions we had during that time. He always wants to be involved in every decision and endeavor, and he was there for them all!

He has come to know each member of our faith family here at SFX and truly has served as a shepherd to us all. I have been a member of SFX since 1984 and have seen many priests come and go and Father Dale has made his mark here at SFX. It has truly been an honor and privilege to have come to know and serve with him.



Women's Club Spring Bunco Gala



Ann Shelton
Women's Club

On April 24, St. Francis Xavier's Women's Club hosted their annual spring Bunco gala. Run for the Roses was the theme. The doors opened at 5:45pm to a record crowd of ladies and gentlemen and it was not long before the attendees heard the call to the post and THEY'RE OFF! The bell was rung, and dice began rolling at precisely 6:30. The excitement had begun!

For those unfamiliar, Bunco is a fast-paced dice game that is easy to learn and incredibly fun to play. What a deal, only \$15 for great food and an evening of fun, laughter, and fellowship. As the dice clattered against the tables, "BUNCO" was heard repeatedly and cards were punched! The rolling dice were not the only draw for this event, the Women's Club members provided a smorgasbord of tasty food including scrumptious sandwiches, appetizers, salads, desserts and drinks. The food and attendees were blessed by Fr. Dale Cieslik, sadly for the last time as our pastor. The mood was high as door prizes were awarded throughout the evening. A record number of Split the Pot chances were sold. There was no Place or Show here, everyone was a Winner, and some wonderful Bunco prizes were awarded to the lucky contestants.

Bunco is one of our fundraisers that enables St. Francis Xavier Church to support various ministries such as the Parish Garden, Quilters Group and the Youth Group, as well as other outside nonprofit groups. The Women's Club thanks all of our patrons for this opportunity!

Eventually, the dice fell silent and it was time to depart. Everyone left with a smile on their face and a small gift as a reminder of the next Bunco night on Thursday, September 11, 2025 in the Xavier Center. We hope to see you this Fall!



The Crossroads Messenger

Spring 2025



SummerFest & Super Raffle 2025

Super Raffle Tickets went on sale April 26th and will be available for purchase until 9:30 p.m. June 7. The drawing for the \$20,000 Grand Prize will take place June 7 at 10:00 p.m. at the close of the 2025 SummerFest.

This year's SummerFest has the return of the Volleyball Classic, Live Music from All That Band and Crabgrass Conspiracy, a Fish Dinner by the Knights of Columbus, the Cake Wheel, Gift Card Booth, Quilt Raffle, Split the Pot, Lucky Number, Inflatables and Kids Games. This year, we are adding a 2-liter Ring Toss, Pop-a-Shot, and Showdown Poker!

SummerFest booths will be open 4:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m., the Fish Dinner will run from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., and Saturday mass on June 7 will be held at 3:00 p.m.

Please consider volunteering in some capacity for the SummerFest and Super Raffle. You can make a difference!

Gift Cards can be brought to the office or placed in the collection basket at any Mass. 2-liters can be brought to the office or placed in the bins in the Gathering Space. Cakes and other baked goods will be accepted in the Religious Education building on Friday, June 6 through Saturday, June 7. Sign up to donate at the Super Raffle table before or after weekend Masses.



The Crossroads Messenger

Spring 2025

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH
MOUNT WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY
155 STRINGER LANE

SummerFest

Saturday, June 7, 2025, 4-10PM

Games for All Ages

\$20K Super Raffle

Volleyball Tournament

Live Music

Concessions and Alcohol

Fish Dinner

Charitable Gaming Lic #ORG0001325

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH
MOUNT WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY

SUPER RAFFLE

Grand Prize: \$20,000

2nd Prize: \$1500 3rd Prize: \$500

Drawing Held Saturday,
June 7, 2025 at 10:00 PM EST

at St. Francis Xavier Center
155 Stringer Ln Mt. Washington, KY 40047

All Ticket Sales
End June 7, 2025
at 9:30 PM EST

\$20 per Ticket

5,000 tickets available. If less than 2,000 tickets are sold, payout is 50/50 with 1 Grand Prize.

Winner Need Not Be Present

Charitable Gaming Lic #ORG0001325