

Sun & Balance

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THE RENSSELAER NEWMAN FOUNDATION

What's New at the RPI Catholic Chaplaincy?

It's been a year of remarkable growth for the RPI Catholic Chaplaincy – both in student participation and in the depth of our ministry. Weekend Mass attendance is higher than it has been in years, and more than 170 students have registered with the Chaplaincy – a 138% increase over this time last year! Many are joining small groups, exploring their faith, and stepping into leadership roles that strengthen our Catholic Community.

One of the most exciting developments is the addition of Katherine Skovira, our Director of Music. Katherine is mentoring students, forming new ensembles, and preparing inspiring music each week. She has great plans for the upcoming holidays, and is looking ahead to Advent, Lent, and Easter. Her vision is transforming our Music Ministry into something truly special – one that enriches worship on campus and reaches the wider community. As Fr. Jordan Lenaghan has said, "I want us to be known in the community for our music."



Sr. Sue Zembulis, OP

Small Group this semester – and the response has been tremendous.

At the same time, students are taking initiative and shaping the future of Catholic life at Rensselaer. Responding to their desire for deeper theological conversation, Sr. Sue Zembulis, OP, is leading a new Women's



RPI Athlete's Fellowship

Other student-led chaplaincy groups, the Theology and Contemporary Issues Discussion Group, Men's Small Group, and RPI Athlete's Fellowship, are thriving with renewed interest and energy.



Knights of Columbus

The Newman Fellowship and Knights of Columbus Council are likewise welcoming new leadership, adding to the vitality and sense of renewal that now fills our community.

Kevin Krolik '12, a Rensselaer Newman Foundation staffer for 10 years, says, "There's a new energy on Sundays at the C+CC. Students aren't waiting to be asked, they're reaching out on their own, sharing plans, and taking initiative. The number of student-led events and ministries has grown tremendously, and with that, so has the sense of ownership and community."

Why the remarkable growth and renewed vitality? Much of it can be credited to Fr. Jordan Lenaghan, who took over as Chaplain, Religious and Spiritual Life, in July of 2024.



Fr. Jordan Lenaghan

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Welcome New RNF Trustees

The Rensselaer Newman Foundation welcomed 3 new members to its Board of Trustees:

- Robert Hradsky, Ed.D., Vice Provost of Student Experience at RPI
- Adrienne Peltz '07
- Megan Adam '23



Robert Hradsky, Ed.D.



Adrienne Peltz '07



Megan Adam '23

The new trustees bring unique skills, strengths, and experience that will greatly enhance the RNF Board. Dr. Rob Hdrasky is a member of the RPI Senior Leadership Team. Adrienne Peltz and Megan Adam are RPI Alumni with deep knowledge and great passion for the mission of the Newman Foundation, and for the RPI Chaplaincy. 25 members now serve on the Rensselaer Newman Foundation Board of Trustees.

Family Weekend at the C+CC

The Chapel + Cultural Center was again 'the place to be' during last month's Family Weekend at RPI. More than 400 people joined Fr. Jordan for worship, including visiting parents and families.

Many of the families came with students currently involved with the Chaplaincy. The C+CC hosted a wine and cheese reception after the Saturday, 5pm Mass, and coffee and refreshment hours after Sunday 10am and 5pm Masses.

For many RPI parents, Family Weekend marked their first visit to the Chapel + Cultural Center. The overwhelming reaction from parents was, "We're so impressed with the work you're doing here," along with a deep sense of gratitude that their son or daughter is involved with the Chaplaincy.



Christina Shaver '26
Leader of Women's Small Group

and the Women's Small Group.

Special thanks to the student members of the RPI Chaplaincy, including those from the Knights of Columbus Council



Families gather at the Chapel + Cultural Center.

These students assisted with registration at our Family Weekend welcome table, hospitality and set-up for our post-Mass receptions, and helped foster connections among visiting families and students.

We're so grateful for your help and we look forward to welcoming families back next year!



RPI Chaplaincy students assisting with registration.

RNF's Annual Sun & Balance Award Banquet

Thanks to all who attended last month's Sun & Balance Award Banquet in Troy, NY.

The Sun & Balance Award Banquet is an opportunity to gather with, and to thank, the many donors and families that support the Newman Foundation annually.

Fr. Jordan Lenaghan began the evening by describing the growth of the RPI Chaplaincy over the past year, and making a point of thanking those in attendance for being 'partners in this ministry,' and that the work that we do is made possible by our supporters.

Micah Dunsmoor '28, a founding member of the RPI Athlete's Fellowship, delivered the evening's keynote address focusing on the impact of the Newman Foundation on his life at RPI, and how he has lived his faith on and off the field.

Congratulations to this year's Sun & Balance Award winner, Megan Adam '23, recognized for her extraordinary contributions to the Church at Rensselaer.



Fr. Jordan Lenaghan



Micah Dunsmoor '28



Megan Adam '23

Thank You to Our Sun & Balance Banquet Sponsors

A big THANK YOU to:

AMSURE Insurance and agent John Larkin, Mental Health Empowerment Project, Nielson Associates, Primeau-Fahey Studios, & Walquist & Renodin, P.C. for their sponsorship of last month's RNF Sun & Balance Award Banquet.



AMSURE.



What's New at the RPI Catholic Chaplaincy? *(continued from page 1)*

Monica Rokjer, the Rensselaer Newman Foundation's Business Administrator for the past 4 years, concurs. "Fr. Jordan's dynamic, student-centered leadership is the driving force behind the remarkable growth we are experiencing. Students feel welcomed, empowered, and inspired to lead, and that energy is transforming our Catholic community. I am grateful to witness this renewal firsthand and excited for all that lies ahead."

Starting up this fall is a Young Alumni Group, to help us stay connected with former students who have given so much to the Chaplaincy and the Catholic Community. Later this year, a Parent's Council is being established to engage the families of current students.

Monica Rokjer continues, "Fr. Jordan mentors emerging student leaders, engages with them on so many levels, and has truly revived a 'students-first' focus. Based on stories I've heard and conversations with our alumni, he is also bringing back the kinds of signature experiences, traditions, and personal connections that they still remember so fondly

from the days of Fr. Tom Phelan – helping today's students feel that same sense of belonging and joy."

All this momentum extends to the Rensselaer Newman Foundation itself – from recent improvements at our Hospitality House to the observation of the 57th anniversary of the dedication of the Chapel + Cultural Center, which remains the focal point for the Catholic community on campus.

Over the past year, the C+CC has hosted more than 400 events and has welcomed close to 21,000 people through our doors!

Together, we are building on the legacy of Fr. Phelan and strengthening our presence on campus. The spirit of growth, faith, and community is alive and well at Rensselaer – and we couldn't be more excited for what's ahead.

All of this growth, and increased participation, is made possible in large part, by your on-going financial support. Thank you!

Happy Anniversary, Kevin Krolik!

2025 marks his 10-year anniversary as the Director of the Chapel + Cultural Center.

Kevin has a degree in Industrial and Management Engineering. In his role as Director, he oversees the operations, maintenance, and programming of the C+CC and its adjacent facilities, The Hospitality House, and 6 Sherry Road. He manages an all-student staff team, coordinates scheduling and support for hundreds of events each year, and develops religious, cultural, and artistic programming aligned with the mission of the Rensselaer Newman Foundation.



Kevin Krolik '12

His focus is on strengthening C+CC's role as a hub for student development and ensuring the facilities remain adaptable, welcoming, and innovative for both the campus and the Troy community.

Kevin says, "I'm most proud of the perseverance and resilience of the Rensselaer Newman Foundation and the transformative nature of the Chapel + Cultural Center itself. The C+CC continues to embody that unique balance our founders envisioned, faith and spirituality, Catholic traditions and openness to all. It's inspiring to see how those ideals still shape and strengthen the students and community we serve today."

Beyond his director role, he is known as DJ Kev, RPI's 'first call' DJ for campus events. **Congratulations, Kevin!!**

Advancement Corner

Thank You!!

We are very grateful for your support of the Rensselaer Newman Foundation in 2025. Your financial gifts make it possible to serve the RPI students and help grow the impact of all that we do. You are truly our partner in this very important work!

If you have not yet made your gift for 2025, or are planning on a contribution for 2025-2026, please consider a weekly or monthly gift. \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 or more. A little each week or month can be easier on your budget, and will provide us with a consistent, dependable stream of revenue throughout the year.

You can make your gift by:

- Mailing your check in the enclosed envelope.
- Giving online at [Rensselaernewman.org/give](https://rensselaernewman.org/give).
- Calling George Hauenstein at (518) 276-3138.

Non-Cash Ways to Support the RNF

As we near the end of 2025, you may be thinking about supporting organizations that are important to you, like the Rensselaer Newman Foundation.

There are a few easy and tax-advantageous, non-cash options to support your philanthropic intentions, including:

- recommending a grant to RNF from your Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)
- making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your IRA - (you must be 70 ½ or older)
- giving a gift of long-term appreciated stock (held for more than one year)

Please speak with your financial or tax advisor to determine which of these gift options might be right for you. Thank you in advance for your support.

Legacy Giving – Join the Phelan Wiberley Society

"I have included the Rensselaer Newman Foundation in my estate plans. It's very rewarding to see how C+CC and Newman activities are drawing in RPI students in these times. I'm glad my estate plan has the Rensselaer Newman Foundation among its beneficiaries to support this success as well as showing gratitude for the old times."

Jim Ljunglin, Ch. E. '57


Consider including the Rensselaer Newman Foundation in your estate plans and help sustain our mission for generations to come.

Legacy gifts have the potential to be forever transformative in furthering our mission and supporting our students.

To discuss further, or if you have already included the RNF in your estate plans, contact George Hauenstein, Director of Advancement, at haueng@rpi.edu, or at (518) 276-3138.

Leave A Legacy with RNF!

Create a legacy of faith and service for you and for the Catholic Community at RPI

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www.renselaernewman.org/legacy

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Please visit our website or follow us on Facebook to view a full list of upcoming events.

If you're getting this newsletter, you have been connected to the Rensselaer Newman Foundation and our mission at RPI, and you understand how important our work is, bringing together faith, humanities, science and engineering. Please consider making a gift to the Foundation to continue our work; know also that we're praying for you at every Mass at the Chapel + Cultural Center.

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