

Our Family News

St. William Catholic Church
Champion, Ohio



Third Edition Issue 18

February 2020

Saint William Book of Prayers

by Tina McCue

Prayer is simply talking with God. *“Prayer is turning the heart toward God. When a person prays, they enter into a living relationship with God.”* To continue our theme of “Prayer” this year, we have decided to create a book of prayers written by the parishioners of Saint William. During the January Family Faith Celebration, our parish families with school-aged children embarked on a prayer journey. We created a journal for students and parents called, “My Prayer Journey Passport.” The amazing PSR catechists then created prayer rooms based on the sections of the Passport giving families an opportunity to spend time with God and find inspiration to create their prayer step-by-step. Each prayer room (details can be found at the bottom of pages 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, and 14) corresponded with a section of the book of prayers: Friendship, Blessings, Family, Beginnings and Endings, Seasons of Life, Praise and Worship, Journey to the Cross, Jesus, and Call to Holiness. We are happy to share this journey with you and invite every member of the parish to contribute to our book of Saint William Parish prayers.

Jesus said, *“But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the*

door, and pray to your Father in secret.” It is our hope that this visual prayer journey will help bring you to the inner room of your heart - closing the door to other distractions - and spending time talking with our loving God. To further assist you on your prayer journey, copies of *“My Prayer Journey Passport”* are available in the vestibule.

As you talk with God, call to mind the basic forms of prayer:



BLESSING AND ADORATION

In prayers of adoration, we praise God and acknowledge our dependence on Him.

PETITION

In prayers of petition we ask God for things we need both spiritually and physically.

INTERCESSION

In prayers of intercession we make request to God on behalf of other people.

Prayers (Continued on page 4)

LIVING LIFE AS SANTA CLAUS

by Tim Timko

As Mrs. Claus and I reflected on this last Christmas season, we were amazed at how much our roles can influence people we come in contact with in our ministry. Not until last year, when “Our Family News” published a wonderful and humbling article about us, did we begin to see it as a ministry. Sometimes you get so involved with a project, you don’t see the impact it makes on the people around you. This year was quite different.

As many of you may know, Santa and Mrs. Claus go to East Cleveland and deliver presents to houses of poor and needy children each year. This Secret Santa program happens thanks to the East Cleveland Police Department and an anonymous donor from a major Cleveland area manufacturing company. Through the police mentoring programs in the East Cleveland Schools and Children Services of Cuyahoga County, the children are screened and approved for the program. However, this year, it almost didn’t happen.

On Friday evening, before the

Santa (Continued on page 12)



“In the coming weeks our world will begin to awaken from its winter sleep.”

~Fr. Balash

Since our last edition of “Our Family News” we have celebrated the “wonders of His love” during Advent; “lighted” our parish and hearts with the joy and wonder of Christmas; and welcomed 2020 with much hope and expectation! Along with beginning the new year, we have also celebrated the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord; “appreciated and thanked” our many wonderful volunteers with “Derby Night at the Races;” cheered Punxsutawney Phil not for seeing his shadow; and watched yet another NFL team (other than the Browns) win the Super Bowl! In a few short weeks we will begin the holy season of Lent and our preparation for Easter Sunday. This year our Parish Lenten theme is *Lenten Blessings Await!* The 40 days of Lent affords us the opportunity to take advantage of the many *Lenten Blessings* that *Await* through penance, sacrifice, and giving of ourselves in service to each other as we look forward to celebrating the resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday! In the coming weeks our world will begin to awaken from its winter sleep. The days will get longer, the sun will shine brighter, and the trees, grass and flowers will begin to arise from their slumber. We too will become more active and involved by preparing our gardens and flower beds and making ready our yards and homes. The hum of lawn mowers and yard tools will replace snow blowers and shovels, the smell of blooming flowers will overtake the staleness of winter, and the longer bright days will replace the gray and darkness. *LENTEN BLESSINGS AWAIT!!*

This year a special Lenten journey will be part of our parish-wide activities. The journey will begin on Monday, March 2 at 6:00 p.m. with a “Pasta and Prayer Night!” On this evening, a personal Lenten journal will be distributed to all attending. The journal will outline a four week journey that will focus on one special reflection activity each week for us to engage and ponder. You can make the journey at your own pace or weekly up to Monday, March 30 when we gather and conclude with “Soup Supper and Prayer Evening.” Join us on March 2 at 6:00 p.m. to get all the details. I hope you will consider making this journey of prayer and reflection because *Lenten Blessings Await!*”

In addition to the traditional hallmarks of Lent – prayer, fasting and almsgiving – another part of our tradition is our annual Fish Dinners. They begin on Friday, February 21 and continue through April 3, 2020. I hope that you will support this important fundraiser for our parish by volunteering to help with the dinners. One of the distinctive characteristics and a frequent comment offered by our guests is the energetic, enthusiastic and friendly workers they encounter. We can always use your help and in the midst of the “work” it is always a lot of fun and *Lenten Blessings Await!*

As always, I would like to express a word of thanks and appreciation to you for all of your kindness and generous support you continue to show our parish through the sharing of your time, talent and treasure. So many wonderful and exciting things happen in our parish because of your giving and support. I hope that you will take advantage of the many opportunities that make Saint William Parish the friendly, outgoing and welcoming community that it is. May God’s blessing continue to be bestowed on you, your family and our parish as we look forward to Easter and Spring. *LENTEN BLESSINGS AWAIT!!*

Fr. Balash



NEW PARISHIONERS

THE POLEWCHAK FAMILY
Robert & Carol

THE LAMANTIA FAMILY
Stephen & Sandy

THE MCCLUSKY FAMILY
Michael & Rebecca
Avery, Emma,
Grace, & Owen

THE SANDER FAMILY
Victoria & Veronica

THE BELLOMO FAMILY
Melissa, Sophia, & Natalie

IN MEMORIAM

GEORGE SCHUSTER 1928-2019

JUDITH WOLFE 1933-2019

SANDRA MACKEY 1944-2020

RONALD SPRAGUE 1939-2020

Our Family News

Is published on the first Monday after the first full weekend in February, August, and November of every year. Articles and submissions are due three weeks before the publish date. Parish organizations are encouraged to participate and submit materials for publication. Contact the editors or publisher for more information.

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drobinson@stwilliamchampion.org
Reporters and Photographers of all ages are needed! No writing experience needed.

Editors: Nancy Tuttle, Lynn Valentino

LEARN. SERVE. LEAD. SUCCEED.

by Tina McCue

Beginning in 1974, National Catholic Schools Week (CSW) is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. I must say that I have more memories celebrating Catholic Schools Week as a parent than I do as a Catholic School student. Brian and I just celebrated our twenty-sixth Catholic Schools Week as parents and it marks an end of an era for us as our youngest child, Nathan will graduate from John F. Kennedy Catholic School in May. As I reflect on the past twenty-six years, I can think of no better gift that we provided for our children than the gift of Catholic education. This year, the tag line for CSW is: *Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.* Father Lavelle did a marvelous job incorporating these characteristics into his homily for CSW Mass and his words made me reflect not only on the power of learning to live according to the gospel teaching of Jesus Christ, but also the impact it has when this learning becomes a life-long goal.



Learn: I have found that the more I learn about my faith, the more I have an unquenchable thirst to know even more. St. Therese of Lisieux said, *“Jesus, help me to simplify my life by learning what you want me to be – and becoming that person.”* Learning to live by gospel values is the first step in becoming the best version of ourselves.

We are blessed at St. William to offer school aged children the opportunity to learn at our local Catholic School, our Parish School of Religion and Youth Ministry. Families are invited to learn through our Family Faith Celebrations, Bible study, and Adult Faith Formation sessions are offered throughout the year. The Diocese of Youngstown also provides various online courses to grow in faith and knowledge. During our sacred Liturgy, God talks to us in scripture and we learn of his unconditional love for us. This love manifests itself in the person of Jesus Christ as we find nourishment at the table of the Lord making even more meaningful the call of sending forth at the conclusion of Liturgy – GO and proclaim the gospel with your life. God leads us into service.

Serve: Jesus said, *“Here I am among you, one who serves.”* Luke 22:27 We have in the person of Jesus Christ the perfect example of a servant leader. Everything we learn about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit lies empty if we do not take what we know and use it to serve others. God has revealed himself to us in countless ways not only as we strive to be his hands and feet in this world, but

School (Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 1) Prayers

THANKSGIVING

In prayers of thanksgiving we thank God for the good things.

PRAISE

In prayers of praise we express our love for God, the source of all love.

You are welcome to use the insert included in this newsletter to submit your prayer. Prayers **must be submitted** by March 15 to be considered for the Saint William Book of Prayers. Throughout this newsletter are sections titled "Journey with God" with pictures and explanations of each of the prayer rooms created by our catechists for the FFC. We hope that these sections will inspire you in the same way that they inspired our PSR students and their families to create their own prayer. It is our hope to create a book of prayers from the St. William family and to publish the book early this summer.

You may place your prayer in the box marked "Saint William Book of Prayers" on the vestibule counter or prayers may also be submitted electronically to tmccue@stwilliamchampion.org. Please be sure to include your phone number and email address when submitting your prayer.

May the Spirit of God be upon you as you enter this prayer journey...and so, let the adventure begin.

Matthew 6: 6-8

Pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

When I pray I do so that You may hear me
For You already know my heart
I pray so that I may hear myself
So that I can remember all that You've given
I pray simply and from my heart
For words from any other source should not be in prayer
I pray with the words I believe

--Ellyse Berry
(Walking the Path... Kennedy Prays, pg. 90)

JOURNEY WITH GOD

- ...TALK TO HIM ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS
- CHILDHOOD FRIENDS
- FRIENDS AT SCHOOL
- FRIENDS AT WORK
- TEAMMATES
- TEACHERS



MENTORS wonderful to see generations (very young, teen and adults) engaged in the space presented in our prayer room, with all of them joining in and completing many activities. Many wrote open and personal prayers for the prayer boards.

Our Fabulous Fish Dinners Are Back!!!

February 21 ~ April 3, 2020
4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Adults and Carry-Out \$12.00
Children (5-10 years) \$6.00



NEW!
Adopt-a-Fish Coloring Contest!
Fun for the whole family!
Decorate one fish or an entire school of fish!

MARILYN SHAY & MELANIE ZAPPIA ~ ROOM 101
Making a prayer room was one of the most enlightening activities we have done this year in PSR. As a bonus, it allowed Melanie and me to have some special mother-daughter time while we created a prayer room around the theme of FRIENDSHIP. Activities covered topics like: school, sports, the arts, having positive self-worth, and cyber-bullying. It was so

STORY OF THE EASTER LILY

by Therese Tuttle

The Easter season is replete with legends and folklore about the beautiful trumpet shaped white flowers known as the Easter Lily. This flower retells the resurrection story with its life cycles and is the flower of springtime. The Lily is the traditional flower of Easter and is highly regarded as a joyful symbol of elegance, beauty, and a symbol of new life and hope. Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon, churches are filled with exquisite Easter Lilies adorning alters and surrounding the cross to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The importance of this rests on a legend that the blood of Jesus, as it fell from the cross, was by a miracle transformed into flowers which filled heaven and earth. The bulb of these flowers, buried in the ground, represents the tomb of Jesus while the glorious white trumpet-like fragrant flowers growing from the bulbs symbolize His life after death. The snowy white color represents the purity of the Divine Savior and the joy of the resurrection while the trumpet shape signifies Gabriel's trumpet call to rebirth and new life. Easter Lilies are admired as a symbol of motherhood and the Virgin Mary. In artwork, she is often depicted receiving a bundle



of white lilies from the angel Gabriel at Jesus's birth, and the flowers were said to have been found in her tomb after her death. Another legend has it that the lily sprang from the repentant tears of Eve as she went forth from the Garden of Eden. Literature, poetry, mythology and history are filled with the stories and images that speak of the beauty of this flower; there is also a reference to this flower in the Bible, when Christ gave the Sermon on the Mount to his followers: *"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet...Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these"*- Mathew 6. The popular Easter Lily that we use today to celebrate the holy season is referred to as 'the white-robed apostles of hope' and was brought to the United States in 1875 from Japan by an American tourist. The white lily, though an integral part of Easter, has taken a backseat to the bunny and decorated eggs. The Easter Lily is a perfect gift of nature and who wouldn't love to have a beautiful white lily as part of their Easter gift basket?

FIRST RECONCILIATION 2020

Congratulations to:

Addison Goldner
Collin Lee
Emma McClusky
Nathan Swiger



JOURNEY WITH GOD

...TALK WITH HIM ABOUT YOUR BLESSINGS

CHRISTINE DEPASCALE ~ ROOM 102A

Families entered the room and settled into a brief discussion of what blessings are, what they are grateful for, and how they are a blessing to others. Everyone mentioned they are blessed to have parents, siblings, grandparents, pets, and food. Students mentioned that they are a blessing to others by helping their parents; being kind to others; and, giving of their time and talents to the church. The final piece to the Blessings Room was to create a "Blizzard of Blessings." Each family member chose a snowflake design to write their blessings on and then were asked to color and make them unique. Lastly, each person was invited up to the board where they could hang their snowflake on the sky-blue paper that was to become our blizzard!





Appreciation
Dinner 2020!



Finding Hope at Bella Women's Center

by Cathy Poponak

Linda Horm and I represented St. William on a recent tour of Bella Women's Center. We decided to go in anticipation of an upcoming meeting at which Bella's executive director, Tia Ciferno, would speak to both the Women's Guild and the Knights of Columbus. Those finding themselves with unwanted pregnancies find welcome and help at the center.

Our tour guide wanted us to experience what potential patients experience. She took us from room to room while sharing with us information and scripture. The rooms were tastefully decorated, welcoming, and serene.

All services at Bella are free and confidential. Patients are permitted to bring a friend or family member

for support. Patient advocates help the clients to make informed decisions. They start with lab quality pregnancy testing. Next, will come a limited ultrasound to assess viability and gestational age of the fetus. During the ultrasound, real time pictures of the baby can be viewed by the patient and their support person.

Patients are also encouraged to test for STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). If STDs are detected and treated early, it greatly reduces the risk of permanent harm to reproductive health. It is especially important to get tested for STDs while pregnant, as proceeding with either an abortion or a pregnancy with an STD can carry negative consequences.

When a patient chooses to have her baby, Bella can help with practical needs such as new cribs, car seats, and other baby supplies. If necessary, Heart2Heart parenting is

offered. Here volunteer couples temporarily parent the newborn while supporting and teaching the mother to take over. Adoption information is also readily available.

Another service provided is their Door of Hope Ministry, which reaches out to post abortive women. They provide the proper support system and recovery for those who feel guilt, anger, sorrow, excessive anxiety, or sadness over their decision. They also offer encouragement that can help a woman find peace.

At the end of the day, the expectant mother will have to make the ultimate decision herself; but Bella is dedicated to providing the resources needed to make an educated decision. Of course, as Catholics, we pray that God will guide these women toward the choice of life for the unborn. Bella is there to help.

LEAD ELF

by Emily Timko

As a child and young adult, often times people ask "what do you want to be when you grow up?" It usually results in answers such as "a police officer" or "a teacher." For me, I always wanted to be the weather girl on TV. I pursued my dream for awhile but realizing that it was not bringing me fulfillment lead me to take another direction in life. Today I have an engineering job and I also work part-time as Santa Claus' Lead Elf! For the past two years I have stepped into the role of being an elf for my father and mother as they embark on one of their most notable Santa and Mrs. Claus visits; the East Cleveland Secret Santa delivery efforts.

When my father became active as Santa, I lived out of town and was

unable to be as supportive as I wanted. When I moved closer to home, I mentioned wanting to get involved in the Santa delivery effort in some way. That's when the East Cleveland event became part of me. "It's life-changing. You will see things that will make you appreciate even the smallest of luxuries you

have," Santa told me and he was not kidding. Houses with blankets blocking doorways; and ripped coats describe just some of the unfortunate living conditions. I found myself being shocked, concerned, surprised, and amazed at how some people must live life. For Santa, his focus remains bringing some brightness and joy to children and families facing these difficult and challenging circumstances. No matter what the conditions to situation might be, the giving of a present be it a bike, a doll, a basketball, a game, or a hug the joy, gratitude and hope expressed in the faces of children and parents make being the Lead Elf all the more worth it.

People have asked my dad why he does this "when some of those people probably don't need it" or they speculate that the parents don't have jobs due to poor decisions and other nonsense. My father never

Elf (Continued on page 11)



CONFIRMATION RETREAT

by Carol Timko



This year, the Confirmation retreat was held on Sunday, January 12 and included 37 eighth and ninth graders from St. William, Blessed Sacrament, St. Mary, St. John Paul II, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Again this year the leaders of the retreat were Stephen Poat and Eric Nichols from the Jesuit Spiritual Center in Milford, Connecticut. Stephen and Eric kept the students very busy with many spiritual and physical activities that required lots of interaction.

Sponsors arrived in the morning and joined us for activities, Mass, and lunch. Lunch was pizza,

Wedding Soup, sandwiches and juice boxes. Participants also enjoyed chips and cupcakes for dessert. Thanks to parishioners from St. William and Blessed Sacrament for helping to set up breakfast (bagels, yogurt, granola bars, and juice boxes) and with set up and clean-up of the luncheon.

The confirmation of our eighth and ninth grades will take place at St. Columba Cathedral on Saturday, March 21. A breakfast in their honor will be held on Sunday, March 22.

PSR A LOOK AHEAD

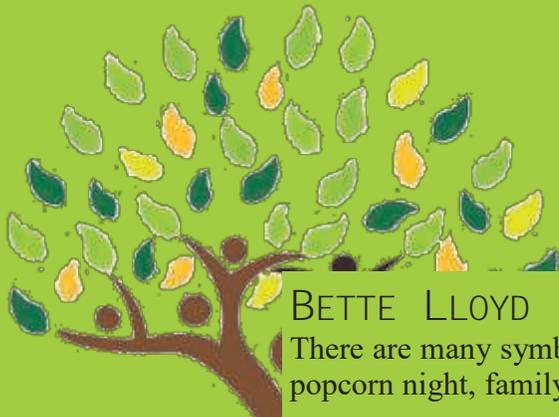
March 1 ~ First Communion Parent Meeting (2 of 2)
March 29 ~ FFC - Morning session w/breakfast and Mass
April 4 ~ Saturday - Jesus Day Retreat for Grade 2
April 26 ~ Last Class - End of year breakfast/celebration
April 26 ~ First Communion - 11a.m. Mass

Thanksgiving Food Drive 2019



JOURNEY WITH GOD

...TALK WITH HIM ABOUT FAMILY



BETTE LLOYD ~ ROOM 102B

There are many symbols that speak to us as families such as a family vacation, movie and popcorn night, family game night, a special song, or family meals. These things remind us of the love and care of our family, whether that family lives under our roof, or is our extended family, church family, or the family of God. Family members participated in the Family Prayer Station by drawing a symbol that represents their family group. Hearts and crosses were predominant symbols showing the love and faith shared within their family. Other drawings depicted a campfire, a bridge that meant something special, drawings of their family members, and family "words to live by."



MUSIC MINISTRY

by Pat Maciejewski



Everyone knows that the Roman Missal was updated in 2010! 10 years ago already! One item in particular caught my eye recently: The English translation of "Crux fidelis" by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. "Crux fidelis" is a hymn for Good Friday sung during the Adoration of the Holy Cross. The words are beautiful: *Faithful Cross the Saints rely on, noble tree beyond compare! Never was there such a scion, never leaf or flower so rare. Sweet the timber, sweet the iron, sweet the burden that they bear!* This year we will use a setting of this by Chris deSilva available from GIA Publications, G-9500. His arrangement divides the words in two refrains sung between cantor and choir verses as listed in the Roman Missal. We are looking forward to sharing these words with you on Palm Sunday and Good

Friday.

Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the Easter season brings many rehearsals and individual practice times for our Cantors, Folk Group, Adult Choir, Instrumentalists, and the Youth Choir. It is a lot of "work" but we do all of the preparation to lead our assemblies in sung prayer for the glory of God even at times when it is hard to balance our family, work,

Our music ministry also serves at funerals offering prelude music and supporting the family during their time of sorrow. We ask for your continued prayers for our Music Ministry and invite you to consider if your talent might lead you to consider serving in this rewarding ministry. Always feel welcome at St. William Parish as together we raise our voices in song and prayer



church and other obligations. Sometimes we can all feel overwhelmed and that is when we must ask for forgiveness, understanding, peace, and unconditional love from each other.

to Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Let the church say Amen!



TINA MCCUE ~
ROOM 103A

God has written a sacred story for each of us, filled with many

beginnings and endings. It is most fitting to lift our heart in prayer as we wake to ask God for guidance even before our feet hit the floor in the morning, and again at the end of the day as we examine how we recognized God working in our life throughout the day. To help visualize pieces of our sacred story, families were invited to use pieces of a puzzle to talk with God about some of the beginnings and endings that have had a special impact in their life. When we keep God as the center piece, we can see how God uses all these beginnings and endings to create our very own sacred story.



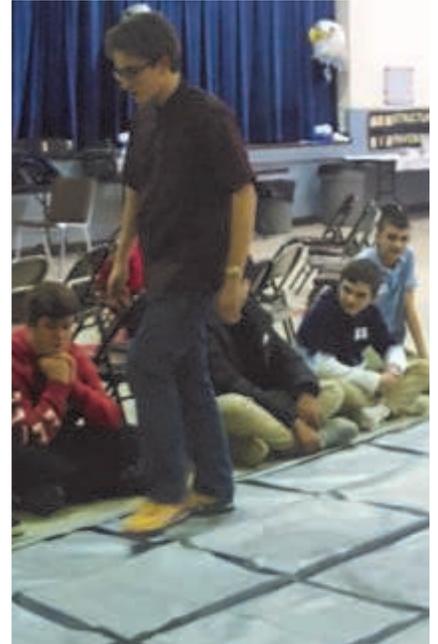
JOURNEY WITH GOD

...TALK WITH HIM ABOUT CHANGES IN LIFE

- BEGIN THE DAY
- END THE DAY
- CHANGE IN SCHOOL
- CHANGE IN JOB
- NEW HOME
- NEW BABY
- ETERNAL LIFE



Confirmation Retreat 2020 ~ Participants and Sponsors



SCOUTING IN ACTION

by Gina Swiger

James Swiger, one of the newest members of our parish, began his adventures in Scouting as a Tiger Cub when he was in first grade. His dedication and love of scouting allowed James to advance through the levels of Cub Scouting and transition to the Boy Scouts of America program on November 25, 2019. While in Cub Scouts, James learned many skills. These included knife safety, archery, teamwork, camping, hiking, and recycling. Most importantly, he learned the value of the Scouting Oath and Law. While it isn't always easy living up to the Scout Law, James has always been a model scout and lived up to the requirements. He helps others, remembers his duty to God, and is respectful, cheerful, brave, trustworthy, courteous, and clean.

The progression of ranks in Cub Scouting was a series of fun activities meant to teach valuable life skills. As a Bear Scout, James went to a recycling center and learned how and what to recycle. As a busy Webelos Scout, he worked with other Cub Scout Packs and earned his NOVA patch, which teaches about Science, Technology,



Engineering, and Math. James and his pack visited the Warren Water Treatment plant to see how our drinking water is processed. They spoke with a ranger from Mosquito Lake who gave a detailed history of the Army Core of Engineers construction of Mosquito Lake. He was also able to tour the old school house in Champion where he learned about the history of Champion Schools one hundred years ago!

James' Cub Pack finished their Webelos 2 requirements, and, in a time honored tradition, crossed the bridge to become Boy Scouts in November. He is now a member of Boy Scout Troop 4025 at the Champion Christian Church and is having

a wonderful time as a Boy Scout working on his ranks as he begins a new chapter on the path to Eagle Scout.



(Continued from page 7) Elf

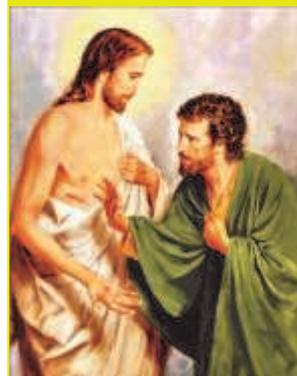
entertains their thoughts. "Christmas isn't about who 'deserves' it. The only thing that isn't deserved is the children not getting to understand the joy of Christmas and the ability for a community to come together and help. It's not their fault or their punishment. We help because we can."

Since becoming Lead Elf and assisting my parents with this effort, I find myself more understanding and less judgmental of people and the situation they are in. What matters is that everyone has the ability to help. We all have talents and abilities to make life better for those in need, whether through our talents, time, efforts, or having a little round belly that shakes when you laugh like a bowl full of jelly that can spread cheer and kindness through the season. I hope that when children think of Santa, they not only think of the man in the red suit but also of the compassion, kindness, and helpfulness that really defines that character we all love and hope to have towards others.



(Continued from page 15) Saints

assurance that Christ is the way, truth, and life. Upon hearing the news of Jesus's resurrection, St. Thomas responded: "Unless I can see the holes



that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe." Eight days later, on Christ's second appearance, Jesus told St. Thomas "Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side.

Do not be unbelieving any more, but believe." After verifying the wounds, St. Thomas exclaim in response: "My Lord and My God!" thus making a public profession of faith in the divinity of Jesus. St. Thomas' unwillingness to believe earned him the title of "doubting Thomas."

(Continued from page 1) Santa

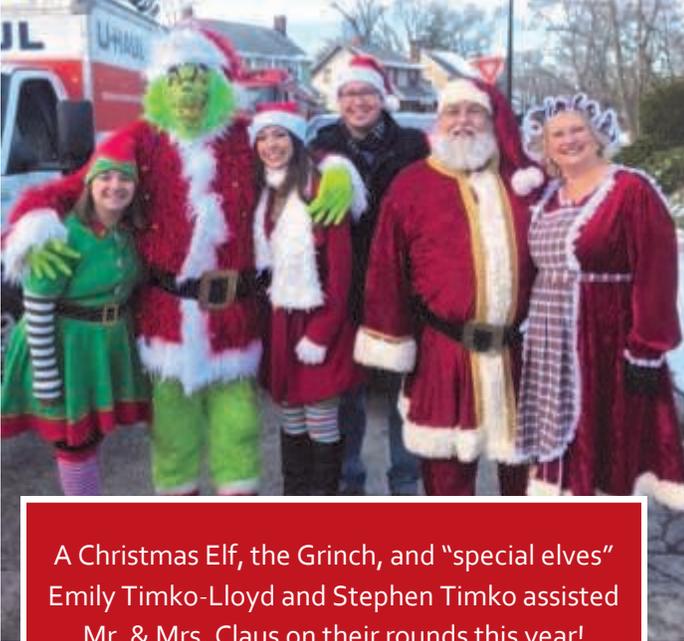
big delivery day, I received a heart-wrenching phone call from "Gary." He spoke slowly and softly, "We may have to cancel tomorrow. There has been a tragedy." I was in shock as Gary told me the tragic

moment. I shared a truncated version with Gary over the phone. "Loving God, through the waters of Baptism, you have called us by name and invited us to share the Ministry of Jesus. In our human weakness, help us to respond in Prayer and thanksgiving to Your call, to be a Light to each other, and to the world. Amen".

I told him we would be there in the morning and that this needed to be done for the good of the city. He agreed, but was cautious. When we arrived, a sympathy card was passed around for the grieving family. We signed it twice, once as Santa and Mrs. Claus and then once as ourselves.

children as about 15 people came out of the house one by one and consoling one another. In that brief encounter some healing and comfort came to this family proving that if you have faith in what you believe and do, the Lord puts you in the right place to do his work. We were privileged to be two angel elves that day. Later that evening a Cleveland area newscaster even said, "Santa and his helpers were out to help heal a grieving community."

We thought that the weekend ended as a great success, until we learned the next day that the young



A Christmas Elf, the Grinch, and "special elves" Emily Timko-Lloyd and Stephen Timko assisted Mr. & Mrs. Claus on their rounds this year!



story of what happened. Two 15 year old kids decided to car jack someone at gunpoint and steal their car. The Cleveland police pursued the teens to East Cleveland where they crashed the car onto a sidewalk, killing a 13 year old girl. That 13 year old girl was to be one of our stops the next day. Tempers were flaring against the East Cleveland Police Department and event organizers were worried something might happen in protest of the chase.



While chatting with Gary, I silently prayed a small Litany of Saints to St. Michael, St. Nicholas, St. Francis, and St. Vincent DePaul. It was at that point our Parish Prayer came to mind as the only thing needed to be said at that

The Mayor and a police officer asked if Carol and I would go and knock on the door of the home when the time came. It was planned to give them a card, a large teddy bear, offer our condolences and ask if we could still deliver presents to the other children. When the Mayor pulled us to the side and told us that the family's stop was next, it finally hit us how hard this would be. We looked at each other and walked up to the house. We were met by the sister-in-law of the mother because mom and dad were not home. They were making funeral arrangements. We handed the card and the teddy bear to one of the

police officer who was involved in the police chase was so struck with grief over what happened that she took her own life. Three days before Christmas, we were stunned and speechless. How could this happen? God had put us there to cushion the heavy blow and to let a grieving community know that people "out there" still loved and cared for them in the midst of violence and tragedy.

Never more has our parish prayer had such great meaning. Perhaps God is calling each of us to be "a light to each other" to someone in need. I recited our Parish Prayer at least 6 times that day knowing that was where I needed to be at that moment. For me, prayer has a greater meaning than it had in the past. The same might be true for you.

FROM THE WOMEN'S GUILD

by Therese Tuttle

December was a very busy and celebrated month for all. The Women's Guild ended 2019 with a Santa Social. Santa arrived and distributed gifts to our parish youth and everyone enjoyed home baked cookies from the ladies of our parish. The Christmas Craft Show was a huge success this year thanks to all the hard work of the dedicated ladies. The Women's Guild hosts this popular community event to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season. The chairwomen and committee begin to prepare for this event months in advance and

every year they do an outstanding job. There are vendors and shoppers who come year after year for the exceptional ethnic foods prepared for this event and to find a special holiday treasure. To all those involved in making these two events very special, we thank you will all our hearts. Special thanks go to the youth group, Knights of Columbus and, of course, Santa.

The New Year began with a game night, Tia Ciferno from the Bella Women's Center, and a "Quarterless Auction" on February 11. Upcoming events include the March 4 meeting with our ever popular "A Very Merry Unbirthday Celebration" where everyone is asked to bring a wrapped gift worth

approximately \$10. We will participate in a fun game of exchanging gifts.

The Card Party will be held April 19 and our April 15 meeting will be a working meeting for the card party. Pizza will, of course, be provided. The Easter Kolachi Bake will be happening on April 1 and help is always needed to prepare these very popular sweet treats. On May 3 the Women's Guild will be hosting the Marian Devotion Banquet. The month of May ends the Women's Guild monthly meetings with the Installation of Officers on May 6. And lastly, don't forget about the Rummage Sale and Parish Picnic in August.

(Continued from page 3) School

more profoundly as we watch the transformation that happens to others as they serve. It truly is in giving that we receive!

Lead: One quality of a great leader is the ability to inspire others to be the best version of themselves. Jesus teaches us to lead by example. When we take what we have learned in the gospel to love God and one another and use that knowledge to serve those in need, we inspire others to do the same. In the words of Saint Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel at all times...if necessary, use words."

Succeed: God created us to know, serve and love him. Success is not measured by the material riches of this world but rather true happiness and success is reached when we are able to trust and surrender to the love of God. We learn this throughout life as we allow God to lead us in the way that He would have us go. It is then that we come to know true happiness beyond measure. Perhaps Saint Catherine of Siena, said it best when she proclaimed "Be who Go meant



Vacation Bible School
June 8-June 11
Blessed Sacrament Parish
9:00am-Noon

This summer just got a lot more Fun!

JOURNEY WITH GOD

...TALK WITH HIM ABOUT SEASONS OF LIFE



JENNIFER KUSZMIEREK ~ ROOM 103B

For the Season of Life Room, we asked the families to read through the examples of each type of prayer: Blessing and Adoration, Petition, Intercession, Thanksgiving, and Praise. The Seasons of Life Room was a place to look at the church's yearly calendar and see how the types of prayer we use in Mass fit into the time of year; including prayers for spring, summer, winter, and fall. It also helps us to frame our personal prayers. Our example prayers were to help the families with how to write prayers if they wanted to include specific time of year, a special date, or even a sporting event.

BANANA COCONUT BREAD

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup white sugar
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 cup mashed bananas
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup flaked coconut
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup maraschino cherries, chopped



1. Mix together flour, coconut, baking powder, baking soda, salt, chopped walnuts, and cherries.
2. Break eggs in a mixing bowl, and beat until light and frothy. Add sugar and melted butter or margarine. Beat well.
3. Stir in mashed banana and flavoring. Add flour mixture and stir just to combine. Spoon into greased 9x5x3 inch loaf pan.
4. Bake at 350 for 1 hour or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let stand for 10 minutes, and remove from pan. Cool.

FROM NANCY'S KITCHEN:

I always seem to buy too many bananas but, luckily, I love banana bread! I like to let the bananas sit on the counter until they are more brown than yellow. That's when I mash them with a fork and leave a few big chunk's. I love the surprise of a big piece of yummy banana in my bread. You will love this banana bread with the added coconut and maraschino cherries. If you love chocolate, dump 1 cup of chocolate chips in the batter before you put the batter in the backing pan. It makes this bread even more amazing! I hope you enjoy!

Love ~ Nancy



As you clean your basement, closets and garages, please remember to hold onto items no longer needed to donate to the rummage sale in August. One again we cannot accept computer monitors, appliances, or large heavy furniture. Help is always needed to make this event a success. Thank you for all your continued support.

SUMMER BOOK CLUB 2020

Mark your calendars for Tuesday June 9 when we will discuss the book "Unplanned" written by Abby Johnson. It is the dramatic true story of a former Planned Parenthood leader's eye-opening journey across the life line, and the life-changing experience which turned her into a pro-life activist. We will meet from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Cortland Library meeting room. More information will be available in the bulletin as the date gets closer. For questions, contact Cathy Poponak or Tina McCue.

JOURNEY WITH GOD

...TALK WITH HIM ABOUT YOUR PRAISE



BRIDGET DEPASCALE ~ ROOM 104

The praise and worship room is where we sang and danced for Jesus and helped each other to learn how prayer comes in all forms. To me, music is the most fun way to pray! We talked about the different forms of prayer, where to pray, and how to pray. Even just listening to the words of a Christian rock song can be prayer! The engagement was almost one-hundred percent and it helped to have all the families dancing as well. It made the atmosphere more welcoming, and let the kids be more expressive. We began with the "Jesus Hokey Pokey," which was good to help break the ice. Who doesn't know the Hokey Pokey? After a brief discussion we began our next song, a nice and peppy tune about praying to Jesus. Unfortunately we would always run out of time for the third song to play all the way through so we encouraged everybody to dance out the door!

FIVE SAINTS FOR EASTER

by Therese Tuttle



The 50 days of Easter, which last until Pentecost, are an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the Resurrection in the same way that the 40 days of Lent is a call to enter into a deeper

understanding of Jesus' passion and death. Here are five saints to enrich your faith journey this Easter season. All five have a direct connection with Christ's resurrection and the life and words of each reflect a different facet of the truth of Jesus' passion and death.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE



St. Mary Magdalene is one of the greatest saints of the Bible and a legendary example of

God's mercy and grace. The precise dates of her birth and death are unknown, but we do know she was present with Christ during his public ministry, death and resurrection. According to the Gospel of John, when St. Mary Magdalene came across the empty tomb, she ran to tell Peter, who comes, sees the empty tomb for himself, and then takes off with the other disciples. However, St. Mary Magdalene stays behind, weeping outside the tomb. A man later appears to her, asking why she weeps – that man turned out to be Jesus. Pope St. Gregory the Great tells us of Mary Magdalene, *"We should reflect on Mary's attitude and the great love she felt for Christ, for though the disciples had left the tomb, she remained. She was still seeking the one she had not found and while she sought she wept. Burning with the fire of love, she longed for him who she thought had been taken away. And so it happened that the woman who stayed behind to seek Christ was the only one to see*

him". St. Mary Magdalene teaches us how to live out the mystery of the resurrection in our lives – Christ is dead, Christ is risen, and Christ is always with us. St. Mary Magdalene's story speaks to all of us today, all Christians are standing with the outside the tomb waiting for God and longing for Christ.

ST. PETER



St. Peter, also known as Simon Peter of Cephas, is considered the first Pope of the Catholic

Church and was ordained by Jesus in the "Rock of My Church" written in Matthew 16:17-18. After being told by St. Mary Magdalene that Jesus' tomb was empty, he went to the tomb to confirm her story. Luke 24:12 reads: *"Peter, however, went off to the tomb, running. He bent down and looked in and saw the linen cloth but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened."* The amazement at the Eucharist and the resurrection are closely related. Without the resurrection we could not receive the gift of the Eucharist. We can rekindle our amazement of the resurrection and the Eucharist by following St. Peter's example.

ST. PAUL



Unlike St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalene, St. Paul did not witness the empty tomb of Jesus. He was originally

known as Saul and was a Roman citizen and a Pharisee. He presided over the persecutions of early Christians and was present at the martyrdom of St. Peter. Not only was St. Paul not one of the original disciples, he was their persecutor. On the Road to Damascus, St. Paul encountered the resurrected Christ. His appearance to St. Paul is important

because it undermines skeptic claims that the resurrection was a hoax and unlike all the other post-Resurrection appearances, it occurs after Jesus ascended. The conversion of St. Paul the Apostle was a life changing event. He ceased persecuting Christians and became a follower of Jesus. St. Paul may be the most important and influential of all the saints, and his story teaches us that we can encounter and experience the truth of God's grace, even in those moments when we have doubts.

ST. MATTHIAS

There is little known about St. Matthias. The first act of the Apostle was to find a replacement for Judas. St. Peter had to find someone



who had followed Jesus during his whole ministry from Baptism to Ascension. Twelve was a very important number to the Chosen People: twelve was the number of the tribes of Israel. If the new Israel was to come from the disciples of Jesus, a twelfth apostle was needed. Nominations were taken and two names were submitted. St. Matthias won on a draw of lots. St. Matthias is a source of joy to Christian hearts. It would have been depressing to end the twelve apostles with the criminal face of Judas. Instead, attention is drawn away from Judas's betrayal and directed toward this last, good apostle. St. Matthias' calling wasn't to be a witness to Jesus' ministry but to be a witness to His resurrection; he became the first apostle chosen after the death of Christ.

ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas was born a Jew; his birth and death dates are unknown. At the last supper, when Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them to which they will come. St. Thomas pleaded that they did not understand and received the

Saints (Continued on page 11)

UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- Feb 21 ~ Apr. 3:** FISH DINNERS 4:00-7:00 p.m.
Feb 26: Ash Wednesday Mass 8:30 a.m. & 7 p.m.
Mar 2: Lenten Blessings Await Journey Begins
"Pasta & Prayer" 6:00 p.m.
Mar 11: The Light is ON for YOU
An Evening of Reconciliation 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Mar. 30: Lenten Blessings Await Journey Ends
"Soup & Prayer" 6:00 p.m.
Apr. 1: Women's Guild Kolachi Bake
Apr. 5: Palm Sunday
Apr. 9 ~11: Holy Week Triduum
Apr. 12: Easter Sunday
Apr. 19: Women Guild Annual Card Party 12 Noon
Apr. 26: Last PSR/First Communion 11 a.m. Mass
May 3: Marian Devotion/May Crowning/
Mother-Child Banquet 12:00 Noon



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