



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

837 Bartlett Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421

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www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR LITURGIES AND EVENTS

We keep **Lent** as one parish family.

We put aside our business-as-usual to support each other
In **prayer, fasting and almsgiving.**

We turn to God to **enlighten** us and **purify** us
throughout the lengthening brightness of this holy season.



ASH WEDNESDAY

Wednesday, February 14
8:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Mass with Distribution of Ashes

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays of Lent
February 16, 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23
7:00 p.m.

TAIZÉ PRAYER

Monday, February 19
7:00 p.m.

LENTEN PASTUS

Wednesdays of Lent
February 21, 28, March 7
5:30 p.m.—Mass
6:15 p.m.—Soup Supper
7:00 p.m.—Presentation

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Saturday/Sunday, February 24/25
at all weekend Masses

PARISH MISSION

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
March 11, 12, 13
7:00 p.m.

COMMUNAL RECONCILIATION SERVICE

Wednesday, March 21
7:00 p.m.



Let us make the time
to enrich and deepen
our spiritual lives
on our Lenten journey to
Easter.

February 2018

Inside
this
Issue:

Lenten Events.....	Page 1
Lenten Practices	Page 2
Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick...	Page 3
Sacrament of Reconciliation.....	Page 3
Pastus.....	Page 4
Parish Mission with Dan Schutte.....	Page 5
Holy Week & Triduum Schedule.....	Page 6
Catholic Services Appeal.....	Page 7
Operation Rice Bowl.....	Page 7

Knightly News.....	Page 8
Rite of Christian Initiation.....	Page 8
Youth News	Page 9
Small Christian Communities.....	Page 9
Baptismal Preparation.....	Page 9
Virgin of the Star.....	Page 10
Stewardship.....	Page 11
New Members.....	Page 11
Mardi Gras	Page 12

LENTEN PRACTICES:

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving

The observance of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, a day of fasting and abstinence for all Catholics. At Mass on Ash Wednesday, the imposition of ashes replicates an ancient penitential practice and symbolizes our dependence upon God's mercy and forgiveness.

During Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholic.

**“Prayer needs two wings to fly:
fasting and almsgiving.”**

St. Augustine

Traditional Lenten practices of **PRAYER**, **FASTING** and **ALMSGIVING** and other forms of self-denial are recommended most warmly by the Church. Daily Mass is particularly encouraged.

PRAYER: The church asks us to surrender ourselves to prayer and to the reading of Scripture. More time given to prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully.

FASTING: The fasting observed during Lent is a sign of discipline — fasting for certain periods of time, fasting from certain foods, but also fasting from other things and activities. Fasting is more than a means of developing self control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God.

ALMSGIVING: Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life we began when we were baptized. Almsgiving is a sign of our care for those in need and an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given to us.

The key to fruitful observance of these practices is to recognize their link to baptismal renewal. We are called not just to abstain from sin during Lent, but to true conversion of our hearts and minds. We recall those waters in which we were baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil and began new life in Christ.

LENTEN OBSERVANCES:

- ◆ **ASH WEDNESDAY, ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT** and **GOOD FRIDAY** are days of **abstinence** from meat for those 14 years of age and older.
- ◆ **ASH WEDNESDAY** and **GOOD FRIDAY** are also days of **fasting** for those who are 18 years of age but not yet 59.

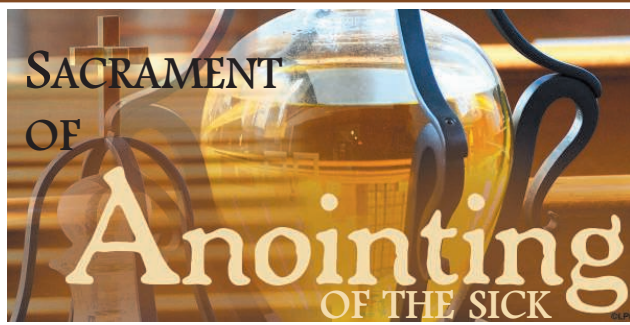
On days of fasting, those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal, two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one's needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed.

If a person is unable to observe the above guidelines due to ill health or other serious reasons, other suitable forms of self-denial are encouraged. In all cases, common sense should prevail, and ill persons should not further jeopardize their health by fasting or abstaining.

“To fast is to dine with the angels.”

St. Athanasius

EXPERIENCE THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING...



Although illness knows no season, our Lenten prayer plunges the anointing of the sick deep into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus.

Jesus spent the greatest amount of his time healing, both spiritually and physically. It is said that we spend our time on those things which are most important to us. If this is true, then healing must have been a very important value to Jesus.

Our Parish's Mission Statement reminds us that we are a community that lives the values of Jesus Christ. Our celebration is not just for the sick. The faith community gathers with them to show their concern for the sick of our community, and to pray with and for the sick of the community.

The celebration of this Sacrament is an opportunity for the deepening of the faith of our entire community by witnessing the faith and devotion of those being anointed. Through anointing, the sick are reminded that Christ and the Church are in communion with their suffering.

**Our Parish Community will celebrate the powerful
Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at all Masses on February 24 and 25.**

Who may celebrate this Sacrament? Those who are suffering any serious physical or mental illness; those who are suffering any chronic illness. those who are about to undergo surgery; the elderly who cannot get around as well as before.



Lent is a beautiful season to celebrate the **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

The prayers and practices of this season help us call to mind our sins and seek God's forgiveness.

As we grow in awareness of our faults, we can bring them to God in a spirit of repentance, open to growth in grace, awaiting the full expression of mercy and love.

Communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation remind us that continued conversion is a journey we make together as the Body of Christ.

We will gather as a local faith community on the following days:

Sunday, March 18	3:00 p.m.	at Saint Mark in Lawrence Park
Monday, March 19	7:00 p.m.	at Saint James in Wesleyville
Tuesday, March 20	7:00 p.m.	at Saint Gregory in North East
Wednesday, March 21	7:00 p.m.	at Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek



LENTEN PASTUS SPEAKER SERIES

Wednesday evenings during Lent have become an important part of the observation of Lent at Our Lady of Mercy. Our traditional Pastus series feeds the spirit, the body and the head as we pray, eat and learn together. This year, our Pastus series will focus on *the Cross of Christ*, the central image of our Lenten Season.

February 14 8:30am **Ash Wednesday Mass**
& 7:00 pm Let us begin this holy season of preparation and conversion joined together around the Eucharistic table and the Word of God.

February 21 5:30 Mass
6:10 Soup Supper
7:00 *"Crucified Love"* — FR. JOHN JACQUEL

During Lent, and in fact through our entire lives, we are beckoned to draw near to the Cross of Christ. What does it mean to pray with the Cross of Christ? Fr. Jacquel will explore and savor the spirituality of the Cross of Christ, the outpouring of Divine Love.

A native son of OLM, Fr. John Jacquel is the pastor of St. John/Holy Rosary Parish in Erie.

February 28 5:30 Mass
6:10 Soup Supper
7:00 *"Following Jesus as Disciples along the Way to the Cross in the Gospel of Mark"* — FR. JASON MITCHELL, STL, PH.D.

This year we hear the Gospel of Mark proclaimed each Sunday as we gather for Mass. Fr. Mitchell will help us understand what the Gospel of Mark teaches us about the call to follow Jesus as disciples who must pick up our own cross and journey with Christ to Jerusalem.

Fr. Jason Mitchell, STL, PhD was ordained a priest in 2011 in Rome. He has a PhD in Metaphysics and is working on a second doctorate in sacred theology on Aquinas' theology of grace. He currently teaches philosophy and theology at Gannon University and also ministers at the Cathedral throughout the week.

March 7 5:30 Mass
6:10 Soup Supper
7:00 *"Transforming Death: the Scandal of the Cross"* — DR. ERIC S. DART

Our belief in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ stands at the center of our faith. How can death lead to salvation? Dr. Dart will explore the Christian belief that Jesus' takes on our sins and brokenness with his sacrifice and death on the Cross so that we might experience salvation.

Dr. Eric S. Dart is an Assistant Professor in the Theology Department at Gannon University where he is also the director of the Graduate Program in Pastoral Studies.

March 11-13 7:00 **Parish Mission** — DAN SCHUTTE (see page 5)

March 21 7:00 **Communal Reconciliation Service** (see page 3)

March 28 7:00 *"A Holy Pilgrimage through Holy Week"*
Pack your bag. Leave your cell phone and day planner behind. Come and join us for a pilgrimage through the symbols of Holy Week.

Our Lady of Mercy's **Lenten Parish Mission**

sponsored with our neighboring parishes (Saint Gregory, Saint James and St. Mark/Mt. Calvary)

“Lord, Make Me Whole”

Come and be fed. Refresh your spirit. Fill your heart. Know God's abundance.



presented by
Dan Schutte

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday
March 11, 12 and 13

7:00 p.m.

at

Our Lady of Mercy Church
(837 Bartlett Road, Harborcreek, PA 16421)

An unforgettable Lenten Parish Mission with Dan Schutte awaits us! As one of the best-known and most influential composers of Catholic music for liturgy, Dan's ministry has had an enormous impact on the spiritual journey of millions of people.

Dan's music has been a part of parish liturgies for many years. Some of his most celebrated songs are *“Here I Am, Lord”*, *“City of God”* and *“Sing a New Song”*, to name a few.

Our parish mission will be an evening of scripture, story, prayer and reflection woven around Schutte's songs. Dan says that this mission is “about the faithful God who loves us unconditionally.”



HOLY WEEK



PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Saturday, March 24 — 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 25— 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

March 26, 27, 28— Mass at 8:30 a.m.

PASSOVER SEDER MEAL

Monday, March 26 — 7:00 p.m.

PILGRIMAGE THROUGH THE SYMBOLS OF HOLY WEEK

Wednesday, March 28 — 7:00 p.m.

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

TRIDUUM means “three days.” The Paschal Triduum is a three-day season, counted from sunset on Holy Thursday to sunset on Easter Sunday. During these days we keep one festival—our Passover, our Easter. We come together with all the people of our parish—and in spirit with all Christians in every time and place—to fast, pray, keep watch, and rejoice. It is the Passover of the Lord.

These once-a-year celebrations are the highlight of the Church year
and the source of life for our community.

Please plan on attending these most sacred liturgies.

HOLY THURSDAY, March 29

7:00 p.m. MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
9:00 p.m. Night Prayer

GOOD FRIDAY, March 30

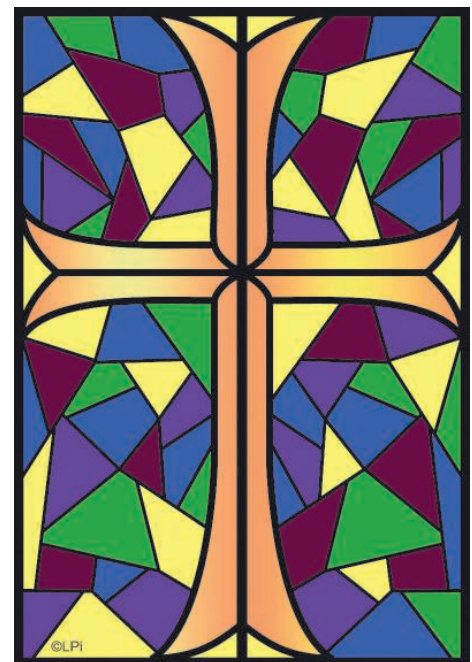
9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
1:00 p.m. Outdoor Stations of the Cross
3:00 p.m. LITURGY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

HOLY SATURDAY, March 31

9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer
11:30 a.m. Blessing of Easter Foods
9:00 p.m. THE GREAT EASTER VIGIL

EASTER SUNDAY, April 1

8:30 & 11 a.m. EASTER SUNDAY MASS





It is again time for the **Catholic Services Appeal**. This Appeal offers us both an opportunity and a means to demonstrate our love and concern for so many of our neighbors who need the healing touch of God in their lives.

As individuals and parishes, we are called upon to ensure continued excellence in the works of religion, education, and charity throughout our Diocesan Church Community. Many of these needs are beyond the scope and resources of any individual or parish. Thus, the theme for this year's Catholic Services Appeal is "**United In Service**" that we might be able to respond and meet these needs of our brothers and sisters of our Diocese. Last year your contributions assisted over 43,000 poor and vulnerable individuals. It also helped support over 90 ministries and services of our Diocese.

Our Catholic Services Appeal Assessment for 2018 is **\$61,681.00**. In our Parish, we have relied on the funds collected above this amount to pay off our parish debt. As a Parish Community, we are so grateful to all of you for your support in the Catholic Services Appeal because it has allowed us to burn our mortgage at our Feast Day celebration last September.

Now that we are debt free, we must begin to face the **updates we need in our parish**. We have roof repairs, we have a boiler that is having problems, we need to think about replacing the carpeting in the Gathering and Worship Space, we need to catch up on the things we have been unable to do.

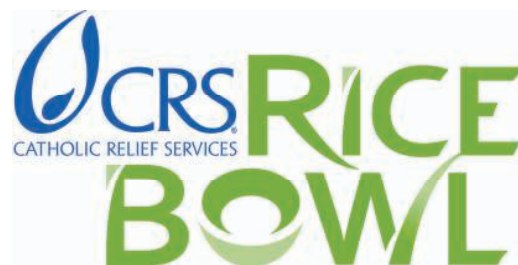
Because I believe that the Catholic Services Appeal is so important for the work of the Church, especially to the most needy among us, and because we need to begin to face the updates we need in our parish, I am asking that you donate to this Appeal.

Know that I appreciate all the sacrifices you and your family offer our parish and Diocese. Be assured of my constant prayers

Thank you,
Fr. Ritchie

This Lent, parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy are once again invited to participate in **Operation Rice Bowl**.

Operation Rice Bowl is a project sponsored by Catholic Relief Services. CRS is a Catholic developmental organization assisting the poorest and most desperate of our brothers and sisters around the world. Through Operation Rice Bowl, we are given an opportunity to share our abundant blessings with those in need.



Rice Bowl cardboard banks and family calendars were distributed to all of the children enrolled in our Faith Formation Ministry. Additional Rice Bowls and calendars are available for families not connected with religious education.

The calendars offer excellent suggestions for keeping the needs of others before us during Lent. Information on the causes of hunger and poverty in various regions of the globe are given in a way that is easy for all to understand.

As we give up luxuries such as chocolate or eat a simple meal once a week, we are invited to place the money we save into the Rice Bowl Bank. In this way, our acts of self-sacrifice are not tests of our self-will, but opportunities to help others. The money in each bank is turned in to the Religious Education Office during the Easter season. From there, it is mailed to Catholic Relief Services to help the hungry and homeless, those without access to education or medical care around the world.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS®

“KNIGHTLY” NEWS

C.O.A.L. SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

In December we received word that parishioners **Dick & Audrey Miller** won the *Elvis & Southern Sounds 8 Day Tour!* We congratulate them and thank all who supported this fundraiser. The profit enabled us to pay for Bibles for the youth who have just begun Confirmation classes. Also, at the state level, scholarships are offered to sons and daughters of Knights. From our parish, one application has been submitted.

BINGO /PIZZA V.A. MEDICAL CENTER

Once per quarter, a group of Knights go to the V.A. and provide an evening for the veterans. Social time after bingo is always rewarding. Come join us if you can. We recently had one in January and the next will be in April.

25th ANNIVERSARY

Our council was chartered on June 27, 1993. Discussion has begun on how to celebrate the upcoming 25th anniversary of our founding.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OLM SCHOLARSHIPS

On the subject of scholarships, as in the past, the Knights will be offering scholarships to graduating high school seniors of our parish. A portion of the proceeds from the upcoming Golf and Sports Raffle will be earmarked for them. We intend to begin the process earlier than in past years, so watch the bulletin for details.

25th ANNUAL GOLF & SPORTS RAFFLE

Planning has begun for this event which is in its 25th consecutive year. It will be bigger and better than ever - thanks to all the Knights, Ladies of the Knights, parishioners and friends who so generously offer their help and support.

CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR FAMILIES

The gift of the book *Rediscovering Jesus* by Matthew Kelly was offered to each family at Christmas Liturgies. We were able to offer financial support.



JOINING THE CATHOLIC FAMILY

The **Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA)** is a journey of faith designed for those adults seeking baptism or full communion in the Catholic Community. This journey, which takes 1 to 3 years, invites participants into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, study, ritual, and community. Anyone who would like to learn more about this transforming journey of faith can call the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation or speak with any member of the parish community.

Because this journey follows a road for which there is no GPS system, all questions, doubts and detours are welcome as blessings. God's ways never fail to surprise.

If you would like more information about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, for yourself or for someone you know, you may call Irene Lucas at 899-6132 or email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org to schedule an individual meeting.

Youth News



The **National Catholic Youth Conference** was a fantastic experience for all those who participated. All of the key note speakers did an excellent job engaging everyone in their faith life stories. We were blessed by both parishes and had some wonderful meals! Those who can participate again in 2 years are already talking about going and who should not miss the next one.

Those attending **this summer's mission trip** are: Stephenie Dalton, Charlotte Dalton, Gabe DeVore, Thomas DeVore, Katrina DeVore, Emma Maille, Cassidy Hall, Nick Heise, Ariel Owens, Marina Owens, and Anna Ramahlo. Fifteen youth and four adults from St. Mark's and other parishes will also be attending, bringing the number to 30. They are working hard on their fundraising plans.

Our **mission trip Bingo** is right around the corner! Join us on **Saturday, March 17 at Saint James' Place**. Doors open at 11:30 am and bingo is 12:00-4:00 p.m. The cost is \$20 for 15 games for our gift baskets. This year we will also have extra games for cash! As in the past, there will be other games of chance, a 50/50 and a patio set raffle. There will be food and beverages available for sale as well as a wonderful bake sale of home made goodies! See a mission trip participant or stop in the office for tickets.



PARENT BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION

Are you expecting a new child? Has a baby recently blessed your family? Is the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism with your child something that you are planning for some time in the next year? If so, mark your calendar for **noon on Sunday, March 18** for our semi-annual Baptismal Preparation Session.

All parents/guardians and godparents are asked by the Diocese of Erie, to prepare their hearts and spirits to celebrate this wonderful Sacrament with their child by attending a special session just for them. Because these sessions are only held twice a year here at Our Lady of Mercy, you will want to take advantage of the opportunity now.



To register for the Baptismal Preparation Session, parents/guardians are asked to call the Parish Office at 899-5342. Questions can be asked at that time. Or, check out our web page to see the answers to the most frequently asked questions about child Baptism.

If the session scheduled at Our Lady of Mercy does not fit your calendar, you may attend a Baptismal Preparation Session for Parents at any Catholic parish in the area. If you call the area parishes, you should find a session that meets your time constraints; evening and weekend classes are available.



THREE GOOD REASONS

Why should I try out a Small Christian Community (SCC) this Lent?

...to grow in **faith** as my SCC and I discuss the Gospel and resolve how to live out Christ's calling.

...to renew my **hope** for living a moral life in our society, which often turns its back on God.

...to get to know and **love** several of my fellow parishioners as we gather in a small group setting.

So if you want to grow in faith, hope or love this Lent, sign up in the Gathering Space during our **sign-up weekend February 3rd & 4th**, or call the parish office any time at 899-5342.



Virgin of the Star:

a gift from our Sister Parish

Curious about our Virgin of the Star statue?

The Virgin of the Star statue that was displayed at Masses January 7th and 8th is a gift from our sister parish, Our Lady of the Assumption. It is a replica of their parish patroness given with a lot of love for us to venerate and, in this way, be more united in Christian fellowship with them.

So, here is a little history about the statue. The Quijano Ic family – Felipe Quijano Mendez, Rosi Ic Yam, children Rossana Violeta and David Felipe – decided to have a replica of the image of their patroness built for their family altar. A provider of wax products from Tlaxcala (1288 km, 800 miles from Peto) was selling his products in Peto and on one occasion commented on the beauty of Our Lady of the Assumption’s patroness. He was asked and answered affirmatively that his town had an artisan that could make a replica of the statue.

The provider, Mr. Felix Telapa Carmona, delivered the replica on December 23, 2011. He shared that during his journey from Tlaxcala he conversed with the Virgin and offered Her that if he sold all of his wares upon delivering the statue, he would spend Christmas Eve and Day with his family after many years of not doing so. He arrived in Peto with all of his products sold and was very grateful for all the blessings he received!

At the end of that year, the replica was sent to the neighboring parish in Valladolid to be blessed by Pastor Melchor Rey Trejo Alvarado, who had been pastor of Our Lady of the Assumption and with whom they share a great friendship. Now, the Quijano Ic family has graciously given the statue to Our Lady of Mercy.



Example of mestizo dress



Our Lady of Assumption Sister Parish Council members with Fr. Jorge Oscar Herrera and Valentina Rivera, coordinator of Sister Parish program (holding child)

The traditional feast day for the Virgin of the Star is January 1st. Our Lady of the Assumption celebrates in August to coincide with their parish feast day. After an 8:00 p.m. Mass, a traditional *vaqueria* (a festival consisting of three celebrations: a Mass, then a bullfight ending with dance) is celebrated, where the people of the parish community participate in their traditional *mestizo* dress (*mestizo* culture is a blend of Spanish and Mayan, see photo #2 for style of dress) and dance the *jarana* (a tap dance without fixed steps and no differentiation between the men and the women). The following day, on the 15th of August, a solemn Mass is celebrated in honor of the Assumption, followed by a procession through the main streets of the town with the image of the Virgin of the Star.

Our plans are to house the Virgin of the Star in Mary’s Chapel. And, keep a watch out! In addition to the statue, we received several lovely robes for Her. As the year unfolds, we will present Her in these robes around key feast days honoring our Heavenly Mother.



Virgin of the Star statue, located in Mary’s Chapel.

Celebrate the *Joy* of Being *You!*



God has created us with a unique set of gifts. This year Our Lady of Mercy will celebrate the people who are involved in our ministries and the gifts they share so freely.

Sometimes we are uncomfortable with celebrating ourselves. Perhaps we have learned to tell ourselves that we don't have any gifts to share or that we are not good enough, or we fear putting our gifts out in front of the community. Wisdom suggests that when we celebrate who we are and concentrate only on our positive aspects, the negative perceptions will fade away. Awareness of our gifts draws us to transformation.

In order for us to be fulfilled, research psychologists tell us that we need to use our gifts every day.

Don't know what your gifts are? Please consider joining the Stewardship Committee for a **Discover Your Strengths Workshop** this coming April. Date and details will follow. Call Donna Clark at 899-5342 for further information or if you have any questions.



New Members!

If you live near these new parishioners please send a card or stop in to say hello.

Marianne & Anthony Bandur
3570 Backus Rd
Harborcreek, PA 16421

Michelle & Ivor Knight
4076 Mountain Laurel Dr.
Erie, PA 16510

Linda & Gregory Sanner
2680 Tanglewood Dr.
Erie, PA 16510

Megan & Brian Duda
4193 Pinesdale Ave.
Erie, PA 16510

William & Kerry Lutz
(Kalan)
116 OakTree Court
Erie, PA 16511

Eleanor Sigler
641 Troupe Rd. Apt. 213
Harborcreek, PA 16421

Charles & Anna DuShole
212 Wood Lane
Erie, PA 16511

Emily & Ryan Maloney
(Cole)
1047 Newton Ave.
Erie, PA 16511-2721

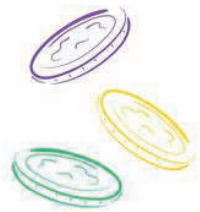
Laurie Wilczynski
5461 Frazier St.
Erie, PA 16510

Rich Knepper
(Conner, Chloe, Braeden)
7036 East Lake Road
Erie, PA 16511

Jared Prokopchak
4554 Backus Rd.
Erie, PA 16510

Nancy Wilczynski
5461 Frazier St.
Erie, PA 16510

Our Lady of Mercy's



2018

Mardi Gras

*Sunday,
February 11th
Noon ~ 3:00pm*

Chili & Soup Cook-Off

Sample homemade chili and soup, then vote for your favorite.

Chinese Auction

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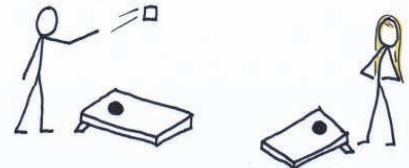
Family Trivia

...

Kid's Area

...

Cornhole Tournament



***Please bring a
SNACK or DESSERT
to share!***