



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

837 Bartlett Road
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www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



August 2020

PARISH RENEWAL

Join Us For Our Annual Parish Mission

(This was postponed from March due to Covid-19)
Sunday—Tuesday October 4 to 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Being a Disciple Today

How Can I Live my Faith in a New Way?

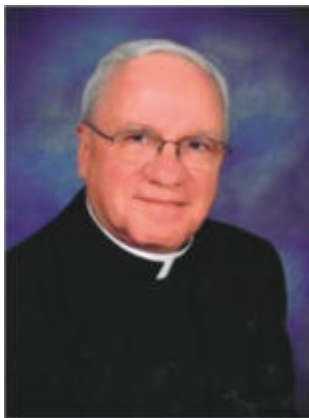
Sunday Evening: Prayer and Worship

Monday Evening: God's Word in My Life

Tuesday Evening: A Community of Service

The parish mission will be live streamed. Enjoy it in person wearing a mask or from the comfort and safety of your home. A link will be posted on our website when the date approaches.

Everyone is Welcome! Invite Your Friends and Neighbors!



RENEWAL DIRECTOR: FATHER FRANK DE SIANO
Fr. Frank DeSiano, born in Manhattan and ordained a Paulist Priest in 1972, is a noted leader of evangelization in the United States. He has written numerous books and articles on spirituality, parish leadership, and evangelization. Living now in Washington, DC, he travels widely to preach and present to church leaders. He has written "Catholic Discipleship" and "Beyond the Pews."

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WOW! Words cannot express our gratitude for how the community responded to our “Non” Festival during this pandemic. You made it the best ever “Non” Festival! You did wonderful. Thank you all so much and may God bless all of you.



2020 ‘NON’ FESTIVAL RESULTS		
Income	\$16,235.00	
Total Expenses	\$ 1,314.60	Invitations \$ 241.73 Postage \$ 72,87 Grand Prize \$1,000.00
Profit	\$14,960.40	

2020 WINNER LIST	
\$1,000 Grand Prize	“Candy” Henry
58” Television	Bill & Aimee McKinney
Quilt	Crystal Lander
Afghan	Char & Joe Chmielewski

PRIOR YEAR PROFITS	
2019	\$20,938.08
2018	\$20,108.80
2017	\$20,041.60
2016	\$20,410.25

The Sacrament of Baptism continues to be celebrated despite any COVID related restrictions. And the Diocese of Erie continues to require that parents participate in a preparation session prior to scheduling the baptism of their child.

The next Baptismal Preparation Session for parents and godparents at OLM will be held on Sunday, October 18 at noon. If conditions permit, we will hold this session in a large space to allow for social distancing. Participants will be required to wear masks. If October finds us in “red” we will find a way to conduct the session remotely. Please register prior to the session by calling Katie in the parish office at 899-5342. If you have questions about the celebration of Baptism, check out the FAQ about Baptism at the parish website.



HAS THE PANDEMIC BEEN CHALLENGING FOR YOU?

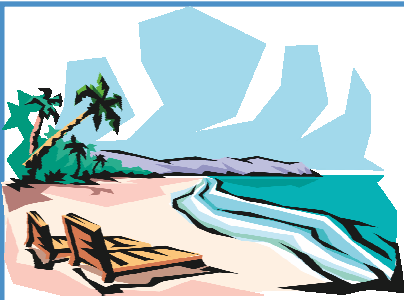
Do you find living out your Catholic faith with family, co-workers, teachers, or neighbors to be especially difficult in these uncertain times? Perhaps you find God’s call for you unclear or confusing. If so, you’re in good company! Small Christian Community members face the same doubts, roadblocks and confusion that you do, yet we find support as we meet with others who share the same struggles. As Fr. Baranowski of Detroit puts it, these communities are:



“Ordinary people helping each other connect everyday life and faith, regularly.”

Our 9 parish Communities have each discovered creative ways to stay connected, some by phone calls, others by spreading out in a picnic shelter, still others use Zoom meetings and some even speak by walkie talkie looking through the window.

To find out more or to sign up for one of our Communities, call the parish office at 899-5342 or Dave in the evenings at 602-4622. Become a member as we support each other in living out our Catholic faith.



Sunset Mass

Sunday, Aug. 16 @ 7:00 PM

This Mass will count for your Sunday commitment

Faith Lutheran Church

5414 East Lake Road

Due to concerns about Covid, we were asked to move the location of our annual outdoor Mass. Faith Lutheran has graciously offered to host us.

Bring a chair and bug spray

Faith Lutheran has benches for services but there may not be enough to safely social distance

NO Fellowship due to COVID restrictions.

Parish Feast Day 2020

COVID may have changed the way we do things, including worship.

But even in times of a pandemic,
we need to find something to celebrate.

Please join us as we honor our patroness by celebrating our oneness
as a “community of communities” on



Saturday, September 26th at 6:00 p.m. and

Sunday, September 27th at 8:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

If you do not feel comfortable coming to Mass that weekend, please
tune into our live-streamed Mass at 11:00 a.m. on September 27th to
celebrate The Feast of Our Lady of Mercy.

****Stay tuned to our
website and social media
accounts for a few very
exciting Feast Day events
we are working on for you.**

Welcome New Members!

Please welcome our new members by sending a card.



Marybeth Alberstadt
472 West Townline Road
North East, PA 16428-2359

Greg & Ann Badach
2661 Dobbins Road
Erie, PA 16511-1222

Ron & Eileen Bukowski
3783 Harbor Ridge Trail
Erie, PA 16510-5957

Donald & Gretchen Lindsey
21 East Drive
Erie, PA 16511-1609

Terry & Susan Skarzenski—
McKenzie, Noah, Joel, Bryce
2909 North Road
Sherman, NY 14781-9712

Mary Ann White
641 Troupe Road #310
Harborcreek, PA 16421-1029

PASTORAL COUNCIL NEWS

Last Fall the Pastoral Council was working on goals for the parish in the area of Liturgy: “The Parish as a Worshipping Community.” After a few months of study, we identified some areas to work on: 1. Learn more about the faith; 2. Actively invite others to the Catholic faith; 3. Empower us to build God’s reign by shaping the values of the larger community and the world.

Just as we were about to write the goals we entered a red phase of COVID-19. The Council members decided we should put our time into outreach to our homebound and elderly, especially those who live alone. Council members and other volunteers made phone calls to about 150 parishioners.

The virus also stalled our nomination process. Fortunately, most of the council members are staying on. They are: Todd Beckes, Maureen Brainard, Joanne Fournier, Vickie Gilchrist, Bill Matrogran, Nathan Matusiak Mo Rizzo, Ashlee Skarzenski, and Katie Stephenson.

We thank Dave Seyboldt and Dan Szczesny for their time and contribution.

The purpose of the Council is to be the primary consultative voice of the People of God for Our Lady of Mercy Parish and shares responsibility with the pastor and staff. The Council strives to unite all

members of the parish in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral action.

The Council members:

- Are the visionaries of the parish
- Engage in a process of pastoral planning.
- Formulate goals to carry out the Church’s mission
- Advises the Pastor and pastoral staff
- Are the eyes and ears of the parish
- Fosters two-way communications between the pastoral staff and parishioners.

Any parishioner should feel free to approach a Council member with thoughts, ideas or concerns.



Religious Education Program Update

It is time to begin another school year. But this year won't be like any we have seen in the past. COVID-19 has shifted many things. But one thing that never changes is our faith in a God of infinite love, a faith that enables us to walk with compassion and hope through all situations.

The Faith Formation Ministry at Our Lady of Mercy knows the importance of ministering to our youth. Video presentations can't substitute for the dynamic created among peers and with catechists that takes place when we gather in person. At the same time, the safety of both students and volunteers is a priority for all.

Bishop Persico has taken the lead in articulating a commitment to faith formation even in this time of pandemic. While acknowledging that faith formation ministries will need to make changes in order to adjust to this reality, he has also made it clear that parishes must continue to provide religious education.

Our Lady of Mercy has looked to the policies of the Harbor Creek School District in determining how best to approach the start of this year of faith formation. The availability of bus transportation for the Tuesday program, the ability to accommodate youth while maintaining a 6 foot distance and the comfort of families having their children in social settings were among the many factors considered. After much prayer and discussion, it has been decided to begin the school year with a hybrid model.

Children in elementary and junior high grade levels will be provided with both physical and electronic resources. Each week, we will gather in grade level clusters on-line with volunteer catechists to review lessons. Parents will be given easy lesson plans to assist them in any additional work they may wish to do with their child. Jr. High youth will continue to gather for their monthly "Youth Event". This may take place outdoors in a context where youth can maintain a safe distance or it may take place in cyber space. Likewise youth in senior high will use a combination of self-directed electronic lessons, On-line gatherings with their catechists and large group events at the parish when they can be conducted safely.

If the Harbor Creek School District closes to physical classrooms, any physical gatherings planned for faith formation will be moved on-line. If the Harbor Creek School District opens up to full-time in-person instruction, Our Lady of Mercy will make plans to invite children back into the building for faith formation. If this happens, we will follow all state guidelines to create a safe environment including the possibility of shifting to Sperry Hall and other spaces that will permit youth to sit at a distance. Masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning between classes along with other CDC guidelines will be implemented. Any family who would be uncomfortable allowing their child to attend physical classes if we were to be able to offer it would have the option of continuing to teach their child at home. However, depending on the number of volunteers and families participating in any option, catechists may not be able to meet with children in person and on-line at the same time.

Religious education registration will take place by mail this year. Returning families will receive all forms in early August. Signed forms can be returned by mail or the collection basket at Mass. New families can download the registration form from the parish website or call the Lifelong Faith Formation Office to have a form mailed to them. Registering children for religious education implies consent for remote learning methods, including the use of conferencing platforms, email communication and web-based lessons.

All families registering for religious education are asked to provide an accurate email. We will communicate any alterations to the religious education process to families by email. Remote learning assignments may also be sent via email.

Volunteers are the backbone of the faith formation ministry. Whether we offer religious education on-line or in-person, faith-filled catechists and aides are critical. The on-line model requires more volunteers than the traditional model. In addition to the catechist, the diocesan child safety plan mandates two adults with clearances and in-servicing be present at any gathering of youth on-line for faith formation.

We are in need of volunteers willing to assist with several grade levels, Gr. 1, Gr. 6 and Gr. 7. In addition, we need adults willing simply to be a presence at each class. If you are willing to help us this year in any capacity, please contact Irene at 899-6132 or ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org to learn more.

Faith formation is a lifelong journey. Our Lady of Mercy is committed to offering opportunities for faith formation to children, adults and families through this current health crisis. Large group events such as the parish mission, will be streamed. Small groups will gather via Zoom or shift to larger spaces where people can keep a safe distance. The parish Facebook page will post links to religious videos and faith based websites. The parish library remains open for parishioners to borrow books. Returned items will be quarantined prior to re-shelving. The parish subscription to formed.org offers a wealth of podcasts, videos, eBooks and live events for Catholics of every age.

COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives. None of us has a blueprint for how to navigate through a pandemic. The situation changes daily; new information keeps being disseminated. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we do our best to figure out how best to provide faith formation to our children, teens and entire parish community.

Meet our new Youth Minister!

Hello, my name is Sarah Phipps and I am overjoyed to be the new youth minister here at Our Lady of Mercy Church. I am originally from Chicago, Illinois and just graduated college with a bachelors in education. I am excited to get to know all of the youth in the parish and grow in our faith together. My goal as a youth minister is to help the youth grow in holiness and help them grow in their relationship with God. I also want the youth to grow in community with one another and help each other grow closer to Christ. I cannot wait to meet all of you soon, when things start to go back to normal. This years youth ministry might look a little different, but we are in this together. Praying for all of you! Have a blessed day!



FAITH & RACIAL HEALING

Embracing Truth, Justice & Healing

An Opportunity To Reflect As A Community On Race In America
From The Perspective Of Our Faith

In the past few weeks, the issue of racial inequality has become a topic of conversation, news articles and debate. We have heard from people in positions of power and people walking on the streets. Our Christian tradition has also been talking about racial equality for quite some time. It is essential that we listen to the voice of our faith as we discern our response to this pressing social issue. In "Faith & Racial Healing", participants will look at the history of race in the U.S. through the Christian lens. Each session will focus on a different era or issue in our racial history.

This enrichment opportunity will be conducted via Zoom. Participants will gather for prayer and conversation, discussion of books and videos, reflection on society and on our own hearts as we journey toward reconciliation with God and our neighbor.

When:

Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

{There will be 8 sessions; 9/22, 9/29, 10/13, 10/27, 11/10, 11/24, 12/ 8, 12/15 plus a retreat to begin the study and a cultural experience mid-way through}

Where:

A Zoom room on your device of choice

Cost:

Participants will be asked to purchase 3 books at a cost of \$40.

Participants are free to search the internet for used copies to save money.

(If this is a financial burden and will prohibit you from participating, please contact the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation.)

Registration:

To participate, email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org with your email address by Sept. 1.

Questions:

Call the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation at 899-6132.

Sponsored by the Social Justice Committee

ANGELS IN SCRIPTURE A BIBLE STUDY



Thursdays October 1 through October 22
7:00~8:00 PM

From classic paintings to handmade crafts, angels are part of our popular culture. But before they became adorable ornaments for our mantel, they were revealed to us in the pages of Scripture. What are angels? What are their roles? What can we learn about these magnificent, awesome, spiritual creatures in the Word of God? This four week Bible Study will explore the biblical passages in which angels are present.

Because of COVID concerns, this study will be held via Zoom. To receive the link, email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org by Sept. 27.

This study is free and open to all. No prior knowledge of Scripture is needed.

If anyone would like to see this study run at a different time slot, contact Irene at 899-6132 or ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org.