



FOR MERCY'S SAKE

the quarterly newsletter of Our Lady of Mercy Church

837 Bartlett Road
Harborcreek, PA 16421

814-899-5342

www.ourladyofmercychurch.org



Thanksgiving Day Mass

Thanksgiving Day Mass: Thursday, November 26 — 9:00 a.m.
Mass will be livestreamed at 9:00 a.m. Thanksgiving Day.



The Season of Advent 2020

Mass of Remembrance: Saturday, December 5—10:00 a.m.

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception:

Tuesday, December 8 — 8:30 a.m.

Reconciliation Service: Saturdays of Advent, 4:30 p.m.,
Wednesday, December 9—5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. or by appointment
*Because of the pandemic there will be no Advent Penance Celebration with
our neighboring parishes*

The Season of Christmas 2020-2021

MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS:

Christmas Eve: Thursday, December 24
6:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day: Friday, December 25
10:00 a.m.

All Masses will be livestreamed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

MASS FOR NEW YEAR'S:

Solemnity of Mary:

Thursday, December 31—6:00 p.m.

Friday, January 1—10:00 a.m.



November 2020

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HARBORCREEK COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Due to Covid-19 there will be no Harborcreek Community Thanksgiving Service this year.


Yet you can support this new local hunger ministry.

The Food **Backpack program** provides child-friendly, easy-to-prepare food items on a weekly basis to local students who otherwise would not have enough to eat over the weekend. This hunger ministry is happening here in Harborcreek thanks to a collaborative effort among the Second Harvest Food Bank of NW PA, the Harbor Creek School District, congregations of the Harborcreek Ministerium, the Ella Cochran Food Pantry, and other community partners. The program is funded, up and running for Clark Elementary for 2020-21, and plans are underway to expand the program to Rolling Ridge and Klein Elementary Schools, starting in November. We are still seeking funding for this school year and beyond. It costs only \$3.50 per week, or \$120 per student per year, or approximately \$5000 per school for up to 40 children per school. We already have a good team of volunteers, but more will be needed as we expand to all three schools. Linda McGarvey (814-397-3069) is coordinating food pickup from Second Harvest Food Bank, packing the food at South Harborcreek United Methodist Church (7929 McGill Road), and delivery to the school. Currently, pick up, packing, and delivery all take place on Wednesdays. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Linda directly. If you would like to support the program financially, you may send gifts directly to Our Lady of Mercy Parish, which has offered to collect our local donations and forward them to the Second Harvest Food Bank. Checks may be written to "Our Lady of Mercy" and earmarked "Backpack Program". Thank you!

Our Parish Community will celebrate the **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at all Masses on November 28-29, 2020**. 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 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.



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.



OUR LADY OF MERCY'S FAMILY ADVENT CELEBRATION HAS GONE VIRTUAL!

Join us on Sunday, December 6th at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom for an abundance of Advent themed activities! There will be singing, activities, a craft and a lot of fun!

To receive the Zoom link,
email ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org
or call the Parish Office at 899-5342
BEFORE November 22nd.
You must pre-register for this free event.



Mass of Remembrance

Saturday, December 5, 2020 at 10 a.m.

Each December, we gather together to celebrate a special Mass of Remembrance, hosted by members of the Bereavement Ministry. Join together in prayer on Saturday, December 5, 2020, at 10 a.m. All members of Our Lady of Mercy are invited to attend this annual Mass to support the families of our parish who have lost loved ones during the past year. During this service, votive candles will be lit for the deceased family members. Please join us for this special celebration.

The Book of Remembrance During November



The Church has a long tradition of remembering those who have died. Parishes have the custom of giving a place of honor to a book in which community members and visitors write the names of their beloved dead. We do this in a special way on the Feast of All Souls Day, and throughout November. The **Book of Remembrance (or the Book of the Names of the Dead)** was inspired by the ancient practice of recording the dates of the deaths of loved ones in a public record or registry of death. This practice provides the living with an opportunity for healing and consolation in the face of grief. The Book of the Names of the Dead will be displayed in the sanctuary from the solemnity of All Saints until the beginning of Advent. It is left open for people to write the names of their deceased loved ones and for others to read the names, remember, and pray for the repose of their souls. Remembering all of these men and women who have gone before us, “marked with the sign of faith,” helps us better understand and appreciate our faith in the Christ our risen Lord who conquers sin and death and brings new life to all.

Parishioners who Have Died Since All Souls’ Day 2019

Steven Apa
Msgr. Daniel Arnold
Irene Edwards
Matthew Gerrans
Olive Johnson

Theresa Malinowski
Donald McCurdy
Antoinette Miller
Doris Myers
Robert Polatas
Norman Schlosser

Karen Schwartz
Scarlett Skarupski
Daniel Sweeney
Chester Szymecki
Thomas Ulrich

*Eternal Rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.*



Missing Our Faith Community? Stay in Touch Virtually!

Watch Our Lady of Mercy on You Tube or Facebook

Go to “Our Lady of Mercy Harborcreek” on You Tube. We live stream our 11:00 a.m. Sunday Liturgy which is also available later in the day. You can watch our recent Parish Mission with Fr. Frank DeSiano. Check out the video Celebrating our Feast Day. You can also find these videos on Our Lady of Mercy’s Facebook page.

Missing the Bulletin?

Here are four ways you can get the bulletin:

- 1) Stop in during the week to pick one up
- 2) Go to our parish website “ourladyofmercychurch.org” and click “Download Bulletin” in the upper right.
- 3) Call the parish office to have a bulletin mailed to you.
- 4) Sign up to receive the bulletin in your inbox. Go to “Parishesonline.com”, search for Our Lady of Mercy in Harborcreek. You will see our bulletins and an option to subscribe to receive the bulletin when it is published.

Do you E mail?

Sign up for our parish e newsletter. Go to the bottom of our home page on the Our Lady of Mercy website and click “Subscribe to Parish Newsletter” You will receive two e mails each week describing upcoming events and links to our live Mass, prayers and meditative reflections and songs.

Prayer Resources

In our recent survey people have asked for more prayer resources. Below are three options.

† Daily three-minute retreat

This three-minute daily retreat starts with gently music and a scripture passage displayed over a nature scene. There is a short reflection and a question or two to help us deepen our faith. Follow the link or simply type Three Minute Retreat in the search box. <https://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer/>

You can sign up to receive a daily reminder.

† Silver Lining Story

Check the ribbon on our web page, and page 6 & 7 of this newsletter for the “Silver Lining” Link. You can read uplifting stories from parishioners about blessings they have recognized in their life over the last few months. These stories are also available on our Facebook page.

† Praying with the Scriptures – How to do Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

Divine Reading has a long history in our church. It is a slow reading of the scripture and a method of listening for a word or phrase that stands out. Meditate on the words, pray based on your meditation, contemplate the loving presence of God and act to find new direction in your life. Here is a step by step instruction video from Paulist Evangelization Ministries.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhwRcg1mHec&feature=youtu.be> This is a good way to enhance your experience of listening to the Sunday readings and deepen your understanding.

When in
doubt-
Pray it out.



Look for the “Silver Lining”

We asked people to share any blessings or a positive experience that happened since March. People have sent in the following stories. Through their words may God lift our spirits.

September 6

A parishioner lost the job he had for almost thirty years due to the pandemic. He had seen the writing on the wall for quite a few years, surviving two rounds of layoffs in the past six years. As he opened up his heart and honestly looked at the situation, he had not been happy at this job for quite some time. He stayed there because it allotted him a good salary and benefit package. He prayed that he would be able to retire from there someday but was willing to be led where God wanted him to go. Every day he would come home from that job feeling unsatisfied and unappreciated but still couldn't imagine working anywhere else, especially after spending most of his adult life there.

God answered his prayer. His worst fear came true. He was let go from this company. Looking back, it's obvious that God was doing for him what he couldn't do for himself. You see, he never would have left of his own accord and would have stayed there suffering until he retired. His wife knew he wasn't happy and was relieved when he came home and said that he had lost his job. She knew his abilities and skills and was confident something better would come along. She kept telling him it would be ok and God had better plans for him. He soon came to believe, knowing that she was right.

His confidence grew by leaps and bounds as companies reached out to him. He wasn't sure where he was going to end up but he knew God did. If he trusted and followed the path that was

laid out for him it would work out better than he could imagine. He made random contact with a parishioner who happened to be looking for someone with his skills. He interviewed for the position and submitted a resume. He was hired a few weeks later. The lesson he learned was to trust in God, knowing God was always working for him even when he didn't know it himself.

September 27

For the past 20 years, my older son Michael's job has kept him traveling for much of the year. Consequently, he would only be able to come home to Erie and visit about 3 times a year. But his job is one that has been greatly affected by the pandemic, and so he has been home and not traveling since mid-March.

So during this time of lockdown/shutdown, he and I have been able to spend so much more time together. It feels like making up for 20 years of not being able to see him much at all.

He and I have both seen this time of reconnecting as a "Silver Lining" that would never have occurred if not for the pandemic.

In addition, it has greatly helped me deal with Emily and Ray being away from home right now, and not able to travel home and visit as they would normally have done this spring and summer. So Michael's presence here in town right now has been a double blessing for me. Thanks. Rose

October 11

In the early 1980's my sister and her family moved to Lawrence Park. It was then that I met her neighbor Sandy and her family. This friendship created many happy memories over the decades. Tragically Sandy suddenly passed away shortly after becoming a first-time grandmother to her daughter Jenny's baby girl Kensley. Because of Covid, Jenny and her husband Mike (both professionals) needed a babysitter for Kensley and her brother Mikey. And so, began the summer of babysitting by Aunt Cindy. Caring for a 3 and a 5-year-old could be exhausting at times but it was such a privilege to be able give them the same kind of care that I know their grandma Sandy would have given. It was a treasured time for our two

families - again forming memories to cherish. "Aunt" Cindy Skarzenski

November 1

From one of our seniors who has been at home since March:

Over the last six months of "Home Vacation" it has been like a cloister. I attend daily Mass three times a day on EWTN. I also do the same in praying rosaries. I exercise by walking around the table during Hail Mary's and meditate at the mysteries of the rosary. I also exercise by doing Tai-chi daily. Every day I try to do a special project like baking muffins and cookies, pick berries or make jam. All for the honor of God and the Blessed Mother. Lou Ann Nowosielski

Advent, Pandemic, and Small Christian Communities

What are your plans this Advent and Christmas? Do they include deepening your relationship with God? Would you like to connect with other parishioners who face the same struggles you face during this pandemic? Our Lady of Mercy parish has 10 Small Christian Communities who meet to discuss the Sunday Gospel and help each other connect everyday life and faith. 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. Consider joining one of our communities this Advent, as we face this pandemic together!

Dave Jacquel, davehasbs@yahoo.com or 814-602-4622



**KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS®**

Knighly News Fall 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic our normal activities have been curtailed. However during the summer we continued to have our regular monthly council meetings at the Our Lady of Mercy picnic pavilion. We will now continue our meetings in Sperry Hall.

In October, we welcomed five new members into our council: John Abbate, Brian Bronson, Mark

Kosmowski, Aaron Ollinger and Gary Smith.

Contributions will be made to the Food Pantry for Thanksgiving, and to a needy family at Christmas.

After canceling this year, we are hopeful that we can have our Golf and Sports Raffle next May. We will make a decision in early 2021.



For the Religious Education Ministry

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2021

- Spaghetti & Meatballs
- Salad
- Italian Bread

\$10 for Adults

\$5 for Children 10 and under

Take-Out Only!

Please bring a plate and a decoration and/or a photo from Christmas traditions for the afternoon!

****You will reserve your pick-up time when you purchase your ticket****

****All dinners must be pre-ordered****