



The Spirit Newsletter

*2016 Thanksgiving And
Christmas Edition*

*St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Centerville, OH*

To the Wonderful People of St. Francis: Thoughts for all!



Hundreds of parishioners, if not more, have made an effort to pray daily for me. I cannot thank you enough for what that has done to not only bring solace to a difficult situation, but also that in itself has encouraged me to keep going regardless of the diagnosis. I have come to discover, since June, to trust God for whatever is going to happen in the future and to stay in the present moment where your prayer and support is, where my family is, and where Jesus strengthens us at the heart of his passion during the Eucharist. I thank you!

A core team of parishioners, through the leadership of Michele and Pat O'Christie, have started a Meal Train for me on Tuesdays and Thursdays. My, my, my..... are we a parish of good cooks or what! Just yesterday, a tasty salmon meal arrived that was perfectly measured for a diabetic. The meals come to a drop-off site, and have been particularly helpful on chemo days. I thank you!

Hardly a day passes without receiving get-well cards from several people. Many of the cards are homemade and they frequently contain messages from children. One such card came all the way from Assisi, Italy. And there a Mass was said for me in the chapel where St. Francis is entombed. I thank you!

It is only through your ministry to me and so many others in our parish who are sick, that daily healings are taking place. The Pope's famous call to pastors to "smell like their sheep" applies to all leaders, urging them to reach out. You have been an outstanding example of what ministry should be. I thank you!

Finally, ever since the canonization of St. Theresa of Calcutta, I have shared with you many of her words of wisdom. Here's her prayer that I pray every day:

Remember that the passion of Christ ends always in the joy of the Resurrection,
so when you feel in your own heart the suffering of Christ,
remember the Resurrection has to come, the joy of Easter has to dawn
never let anything so fill you with sorrow as to make you forget
the joy of the Risen Christ!

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Once again, thank you for your kind help during this difficult time. As we move to the next stage, it will be long remembered.

Blessings and all good,

Fr. Tom

Parish Notes from Deacon Chris



Building and Maintenance:

The St. Francis Building and Maintenance Committee continues to work on getting estimates for our many needed projects (over 85 total). In October we finally received a number of bids for brick restoration, tuck pointing, and window replacements on the old church building. All nine of our roofs have had minor repairs made this year in preparation of the coming winter. More than likely, we will be looking at replacing a roof or two in 2017. The main church ceiling leak (you can see the ceiling damage in the photo & above your heads during mass!) is being caused by our large upper window which faces east. The window is experiencing issues with maintaining a weatherproof seal and is currently being evaluated and repaired. Once those repairs are completed, we will begin to seriously discuss upgrading the church sanctuary lighting and interior.

A big thanks to Connie Tschantz, parishioner and interior designer, for volunteering to work with us as we explore sanctuary color schemes and ideas. As I mentioned in the Summer Newsletter, the Building and Maintenance Committee will prioritize the entire Parish Project List, and once this is completed, will then present the list to both the Finance Council and PAC for discussion with Fr. Tom. Ultimately, we hope to have a logical process in place as we deal with all the needed repairs and improvements over the coming months and years.

The parish pictorial directory

Thanks to the many volunteers who are making the 2016 parish pictorial directory a reality! The main "Directory Team" consists of Directory Coordinators, Pat and Michele O'Christie; Telephone Coordinators, Cal and Cathy Frank; Sign Up and Host Coordinator, Betty Davis; and Layout Coordinators, Heidi Petre and Meghann Naveau. Many other volunteers have also stepped up and helped out with this important project. I would love to list the names of all who have volunteered, but it would literally fill up the page! Again, thanks to all of you. If you did not get your photo taken and would still like to be included in the photo directory, please contact me directly at the parish and I will see what I can do.

Director of Liturgical Music Hired

The Music Director interviews were conducted last month in October. We were blessed to have very qualified candidates apply for the Director of Liturgical Music position here at the parish. The interview team consisted of our pastor, Fr. Tom Schmidt, Matt Naveau who represented the choir, Mike Lucisano who represented PAC, our Director of Religious Education / Pastoral Associate, Mary Ellen Singer, and myself. We are all excited that Michelle Nehrbass has accepted the position as the Music Director. Michelle brings with her a diverse and qualified background; and is no stranger to the St. Francis family. Michelle, her husband John and their five children have been members here since 2005. Please give Michelle a warm welcome when you see her!

I pray that you have a wonderful Thanksgiving, prayerful Advent, and blessed Christmas!

...oh yes, and a Happy New Year!

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Deacon Chris

Threshold Singers Ministry "If you haven't heard the Threshold Singers at St. Francis of Assisi Church, you are missing an opportunity that will inspire you," says longtime parishioner EdnaMae Wynn. "When my late husband was in rehab at Bethany Village, they came to sing for him and my family, giving us an enjoyment to help us through a difficult time. Music is therapy which can help the mind feel happiness and take sadness away. It can bring such a feeling of joy and love for God. This is just what the Threshold Singers provided for us." Threshold Singers are women who provide peace and comfort through prayerful 'a capella' singing at homes, hospice, nursing homes or hospitals. This free service is available to anyone, of any faith, in the local community. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from this ministry, please contact Holly Shields @ (513) 313-8345 or hshields@woh.rr.com.

An Update from St. Francis' St. Vincent DePaul Team by Tom Kwest

In the summer issue of the Spirit Newsletter, I wrote on needing new members. We have added Rich Knoll and Todd & Joyce Smith. Rich is a home visitor and takes food to the food pantry. The Smith's will become a home visit team. We can still use more call takers, a person to write articles for the bulletin and Spirit Newsletter, and someone to update our social service information. I am grateful for the new help in order to take care of the poor, as Jesus asked us to do.

Here is a summary from our quarterly report ending on September 30, 2016.

Assistance Given:

Rents =	\$6,503.93	Gas =	\$306.92
Electric	\$1,945.93	Water =	\$ 50.00
Food	\$ 480.00	Furniture =	\$224.00
Funeral Contribution =	\$ 200.00	St. Benedicts SVDP =	\$600.00
Twining (DDC) =	\$ 650.00	St. Mary SVDP =	\$ 50.00



A total of \$10,360.78 helping those in need, was spent in the third quarter.

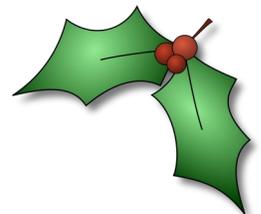
We have recently had to put a limit on funds given to an individual family due to the need for so much rent help and the Capital Campaign which no doubt affects a number of ministries. As always, I am grateful for the generosity of our parishioners who give us the funds to help the needy in our area. At the time this article went to publication, St. Vincent DePaul was in the midst of our annual Thanksgiving Program to feed some needy families in our area. You, the parishioners, have always been so generous with your donation of canned goods that the extra canned goods benefit two food pantries. Your donation of gift cards gives the families the opportunity to get perishable items for their Thanksgiving meal. By signing up to deliver turkey baskets, you engage in the Corporal Works of Mercy of feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty.

In addition, with the Men's Club donation of the turkeys, we are able to give a Thanksgiving basket to about 30 needy families in our area. With the Knights of Columbus help, we are able to take the left over canned goods to the pantries.

Thanks for helping us help those in need!

Holiday Bazaar 2016 by Cathy Frank

Currently we are putting the final touches on our items for the bazaar, but it will have already concluded by the time you are reading this article. Hopefully you were able to do some holiday shopping or enjoy some of the wonderful Italian food.



With the help of many individuals our 2016 St. Francis Holiday Bazaar was another resounding success. Many heartfelt thanks to those who: made baked goods, solicited for raffle items, donated handmade gifts, donated other quality products, volunteered their time and talents, purchased items, or prayed for our success. We appreciate all your efforts no matter how big or small.

The Bazaar Core Committee wishes you and your families a happy holiday season and we'll see you next year!



40th St. Francis Men's Retreat

January 13-15, 2017

"Don't fear. Do not be afraid. Fear not." These words appear hundreds of times throughout the bible, yet they could be no more applicable than today. Yes, "Be not afraid" is the most common message communicated by God through the scriptures, and that is the theme for the upcoming

2017 St. Francis of Assisi Men's Retreat, **January 13 – 15**, at Bergamo Center in Dayton.

Through the parables of Jesus, Retreat Master Br. William Sprauer, OSB will help us examine our biggest fears, and offer some practical tips on how to trust Christ and change our motivation from fear to love. Br. Sprauer will deliver four presentations over the weekend.

Be Not Be Afraid: Trusting Christ, Transcending Fear

Our Biggest Fears, Part I: Vulnerability

Our Biggest Fears, Part II: Alienation

Our Biggest Fears, Part III: Becoming Our True Self

Changing our Motivation from Fear to Love

This will be the fortieth anniversary year for the St. Francis Men's Retreat. All men are invited.

As many as 60 or more men from up to 10 parishes attend the retreat. The purpose of the retreat is to give attendees an opportunity to begin their year with a focus on their relationship with the Lord and to leave with their 'spiritual batteries charged'. Marc Martens, one of the men's retreat organizers says, "We try to provide them with hands on spiritual inspiration and practical suggestions to help them grow in their faith and to be better fathers, sons, uncles, husbands and grandfathers. Many agree it is a great way to start their year!"

In addition to the four presentations by the retreat master, the men's weekend offers a variety of Catholic faith experiences from morning and evening prayer (prayed in two groups alternating responses as done in many monasteries), the rosary, Mass both days, Reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, contemplative time, inspirational movies and social time in the evenings. This year will also feature a short presentation on Contemplative Prayer.

The retreat **begins Friday, January 13** with registration at **6:00 pm** and **ends Sunday, January 15 at noon**. Register at the signup table in the gathering space or mail in a registration form from the bulletin or display poster. For more information contact:

Marc Martens, (937) 438-8844, marc.martens@gmail.com

Jim Kracus (947) 376-0131



Br. William Sprauer, OSB, is a Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, a monastery in southern Indiana. A convert to Catholicism, and former parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi, Br. William entered Saint Meinrad in 2012 and professed his solemn vows in August 2016. He earned a Master of Arts in Catholic Philosophical Studies in 2016 from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Theology. In addition to his studies, Br. William is the Coordinator of Vocations Media for the monastery, helping to attract Catholic men to the monastic way of life.



Experience the Love of God at the St. Francis Women's Retreat

There's something about taking time away in an atmosphere that stimulates you to listen, rest, talk and refresh. This kind of experience can be therapeutic for tired bodies, frazzled nerves and spiritual dryness. Women from all walks of life will gather in a faith community seeking to experience the love of God and to share that love with one another. The next St. Francis Women's retreat is **February 24-26, 2017**, at the Bergamo Retreat Center, Beavercreek. This retreat, "**Come to Me, all you who are Weary**" will have the focus on Jesus - our Brother, our Protector, our Comforter. He is the Son of God who reminds us that we are daughters of God. Come away, lay down your burdens and rest awhile as you discover the amazing, beautiful woman you were created to be. *Presented by Judith Dunlap, parishioner, author and speaker.* Also included are: private reflection times, socials for the building of community, fellowship and fun, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

For more information contact Joanie Rauch at [\(937\) 681-8319](tel:9376818319), joanrauch@gmail.com
or visit our website at <http://stfranciswomensrtrt.wix.com/retreat>.

Marriage Ministry



During his pontificate, Pope Francis has spent much time talking about the importance of marriage and family! The Synod on the Family, which ended last year, was the culmination of study and input by priests and religious, lay people and lay pastoral ministers in the church throughout the entire world! All had an opportunity to express both the joys and the difficulties they are facing within marriage and family ministries. As Pope Francis has said in *Amoris Laetitia*, this is our time to think outside the box to find ways to encourage and convince those who do not understand and who do not believe!

The Marriage Ministry Team ministers in a number of ways to engaged and married couples at St. Francis. It both reflects and seeks to live out Pope Francis' calling to his church! Marriage Ministry is involved in the preparation of engaged couples. Mentor couples from the parish meet with engaged couples to walk with them during their journey and share with them the experiences and lessons they have learned as a married couple. The sharing of our faith story, through the good times and bad, sickness and health, for better and for worse are critical in passing on our faith to others. Relationships are made and where two or more are gathered, Christ is there with both couples, growing their relationships with each other and within the community.

Marriage Ministry also includes wedding coordinators who are a part of a couple's big day. Wedding coordinators walk the bride and groom through the wedding rehearsal and are there on the wedding day to make sure details are taken care of. This generous act allows the bride and groom to focus on the wedding itself. It allows everyone in the wedding party to focus on this incredible mystery of two becoming one and to really experience this mystery as it happens.

But Marriage Ministry does not end at the altar. Marriage Ministry hosts and presents marriage enrichment opportunities for those already married! Happily ever after does not happen just because a couple says, "I do!" To live together with another human being for 40, 50 or more years takes effort, skills, and opportunities to grow in love with each other and with God.

The St. Francis Marriage Ministry Team makes sure those opportunities exist for married couples in fun, relaxing and enjoyable seminars and retreats. The Marriage Ministry Team is always looking for new couples to join them in their efforts! If you are interested or would like to learn more, contact Sharon Christy at stchristy1@gmail.com.

FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION

There are many milestones that we humans celebrate throughout our earthly development, and each of these milestones typically involves making choices that lead to more or different opportunities. We really never stop learning or adapting as we move on with our choices, apply lessons learned, and live up to the commitments we have made. This is also true of our Faith lives as well. Faith formation helped shape each of us as Catholics, **but have we become complacent and let the formation stop when we were confirmed?** Does modern secular society so preoccupy life that our Faith is paralyzed? How do you describe your Faith today? What is happening to that “mustard seed” planted in your Soul?



“The Faith Formation Commission of St. Francis of Assisi Parish commits to initiate, evaluate, and recommend life-long faith formation that promotes the Gospel way of life. Through Catechesis we seek to build a welcoming community of believers in order to make Christ visible both within and outside the parish.” -- This mission statement provides the core inspiration for all Parish Faith Formation programs. However, we are seeking to reach out even more on life-long faith formation. The key question we are trying to answer is: How does everything we do help parishioners (of all ages) deepen their relationship with God? As the commission explores various resources and works to incorporate new faith formation initiatives, we hope to inspire others into action and seek out ways to involve individuals and groups in parish wide faith formation efforts. For now, we simply ask for your prayers, thank you for your support of current faith formation programs, and solicit your ideas and recommendations on how we can help you grow in your faith and love for God.

Danny Sprouse, Faith Formation Commission Chair

Consider Joining the Knights of Columbus

Can you help us change lives? Will you help us save lives?

The Order was founded in 1882 by the Venerable Father Michael J McGivney at a time when Catholic families were faced with poverty, limited work opportunities and the frequent loss of the primary breadwinner. A group of Catholic men joined together to support one another and their families.



The Order continues to place a major focus upon the support of members and their families in great part through highly rated insurance products and services that promote the family. The Knights of Columbus also supports priests, seminarians, those affected by natural disasters, the Christians of the Middle East, the homeless and the unborn. The Order has donated over \$1.5 billion and members have volunteered 683 million hours to a host of causes that benefit the church and community. The Pope is provided with \$2 million each year.

Council 14504 at St Francis of Assisi contributes \$500 to 3 - 4 seminarians each year, contributes \$500 to the parish building fund each year, provides hundreds of volunteer hours to mow and maintain the church property, contributes to Elizabeth New Life Center, adopted a section of 675 and Wilmington Pike for litter removal, supports our veterans at the VA Medical Center, serves breakfast at the St. Vincent homeless facilities on a monthly basis, contributes money and volunteers to the Special Olympics and has helped save lives by providing funds for the “Ultrasound Program.”

If you are a man of 18 years who is a practicing Catholic, please consider joining. This year, we have welcomed new members Manuel Arias, Joseph Cella, Richard Cramer, Andres Gonzales, Felipe Guerrero, Michael Hummel, Don Maines, Shawn McManamy, James Parslow, Mark Rodney, Kevin Smith, Patrick Titone, Lawrence White and Jeffrey Zehringer. Will you join us?

Steve Berns - Grand Knight, Father Francis X Hoffer Council 14504 (sfb65@juno.com)

The Giving Tree Ministry



Each Christmas season the parishioners of St. Francis are given the opportunity to help the less fortunate in our community celebrate Christmas. Our efforts are coordinated by the Giving Tree Ministry which receives family referrals from Catholic Social Services, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Bellbrook Sugarcreek Family Resource Center. These groups screen the families to determine needs and provide gift lists to St. Francis. The Ministry uses the lists to make gift tags that decorate "Giving Trees" placed in the gathering space. Parishioners are encouraged to select tags, purchase the requested gifts and return them to the gathering space. The Ministry then coordinates their delivery. Last year assistance was given to 63 families in the form of individual gifts and food certificates.

Additional items are collected for the Elizabeth New Life Center, Good Shepherd Ministries' free store, and the Catholic Social Services' Santa Shop. Good Shepherd Ministries provides assistance to individuals with a history of incarceration or drug abuse. The Santa Shop allows parents to select Christmas gifts for their children. The Giving Trees will be in place for two weeks beginning the weekend after Thanksgiving for parishioners to select gift requests. Cash donations are also accepted for the purchase of grocery certificates.

The Giving Tree core committee organizes and implements the project. Anyone wishing to serve on the core committee can contact Calleen Moloney at 848-4718 or calleen@woh.rr.com. Parishioners may also help by sorting gifts on December 11th in Friendship Hall or delivering gifts to Catholic Social Services on December 12th. Thank you for your support in the past and we look forward to your continued participation in the program. Your generosity truly makes a difference!



Calleen Moloney

The Advent Season



Advent Penance Services

Tuesday, December 6

7:00 pm at St. Charles Borromeo

Wednesday, December 21

7:00 pm at St. Albert the Great



Nativity of the Lord

St. Francis of Assisi Christmas Mass Schedule

Saturday, December 24

5:00 pm & 10:00 pm

Sunday, December 25

8:30 am & 11:00 am

Saturday, December 31

5:00 pm

Sunday, January 1, 2017

8:30 am & 11:00 am