

The Joyful Family of God OLC Connection

Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church · Spring/Summer 2013 · Volume 7, Issue 6



Easter Egg Celebration

by Wendy Michalski

More than 2,000 colored eggs greeted everyone coming up Strasburg Road as they passed the Schneider Parish Center

on Easter Sunday. And, if the "Alleluia's" during Mass didn't catch their attention, the exclamations of joy as the families and children of OLC descended upon those eggs certainly did!

An abundance of children scampered through the field grabbing egg-after-egg and each child brought his or her own special joy to such an already joyous day. The generosity of our parish family was met with gratitude and glee by both participants and onlookers. Thoughtful donations of eggs, candy, light breakfast refreshments and time allowed all to enjoy the moment!

Special thanks to all who donated eggs and candy (and those tiny handmade cranes!), to LTJV volunteers for filling roughly 1,500 eggs, the Hodorovich and Remphrey families for their time and energy and OLC staff for helping spread the word and redirect support. What a success!



A YEAR OF EVENTS

Here are five upcoming events to add to your calendar!



September 8

OLC 160TH Anniversary
Mass & Community Picnic

October 5

Our Lady of the Rosary Tour
and Procession at the
Padre Pio Centre, Barto, PA

October 19

Parish Gala & Silent Auction
at Railroad Museum of
Pennsylvania, Strasburg, PA.

November 24

Closing Celebration of the
Year of Faith Solemn Mass

December 7 & 8

Anniversary Celtic
Christmas Concerts

Our Pastor's Ponderings

by Father Victor J. Eschbach

Of late, as I've been reflecting on all the good works that are being accomplished in our parish, I can't help but marvel at how much is being done by so few. Our Youth ministries are thriving from OLC-ELC, through PREP, LTJV, LIFE TEEN for Middle School and High School. Our outreach to those in need through PCCO, and now, the new Octorara Area Food Cupboard is serving literally hundreds by the month. Our Health Care Ministry touches the shut-in elderly, sick, and lonely in our midst. Our Bereavement Ministry brings comfort to those grieving the loss of loved ones. And now, with our Spanish language Mass on Saturday evenings, we cry "welcome" to our Spanish-speaking sisters and brothers. Then, there are the beautiful Liturgical ministries—Eucharistic ministers serving, not just at Mass, but taking Communion weekly to the sick and shut-in; our Altar Servers, Proclaimers of the Word, Cantors and Choirs, Ushers and Ministers of Hospitality—all serving to lead us in our praise and worship of God. There are also the unsung heroes who quietly go about the business of creating and publishing this newsletter; work on updating our website; organizing our anniversary events; fixing and cleaning and beautifying our churches and properties.

I wonder if, when people see so much going on, they think they are not needed. Or when they see the same people doing so many things, do they think it is a "clique" of just the few who are running everything? Nothing could be further from the truth. Every member of the Church is called to ministry. No one is excused! No one is not needed! No one is not wanted! No one is unworthy!

Recently, I came across this message hanging on the wall in a United Methodist Church that I wish every member of our Church Family would take to heart.

"If you seriously think that God can't use you, or the church doesn't need you, consider this (you need to be somewhat familiar with your Bible to get it):

Isaac was a daydreamer. Jacob was a liar. Leah was ugly. Moses had a stuttering problem. Gideon was afraid. Samson had long hair and was a womanizer. David was a rapist and a murderer. Rahab was a prostitute. Elijah was suicidal. Jeremiah and Timothy were too young. Abraham and Sarah, Elizabeth and Zechariah too old. Isaiah preached naked. Jonah ran away from God. Job went bankrupt. Noah was a drunk. Naomi was a widow and Martha was a worrier. Peter denied Christ and Paul persecuted Christians. The disciples fell asleep while praying. Zaccheus was too small. Timothy had an ulcer. And Lazarus was dead!"

To all who do and give and share and work and plan and organize and sing and pray and play, THANK YOU! To those of you who have not yet learned that the only dead wood in the Church is supposed to be the pews, please come and share in the joy of being Church, not just coming occasionally. We need YOU! We want YOU! The Lord Himself is calling YOU!

Your brother in Christ,

Father Eschbach



Stitched with love

A HISTORY OF OUR PRAYER S

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HEALTHY OUTREACH

by Carol Egan



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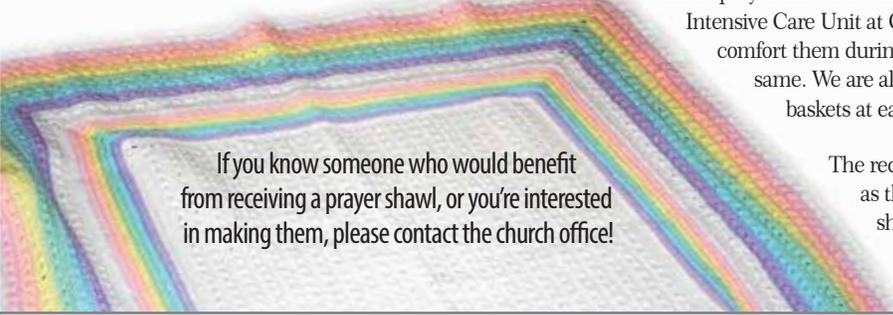
Stitched with love



A HISTORY OF OUR PRAYER SHAWL MNISTRY by Carol Egan

For the past 10 years, small informal groups of women from OLC have been making chemo caps for cancer patients and donating them to various cancer centers, where they were very well-received by the patients undergoing treatment. At one of our meetings in 2010, Nancy McNamara proposed that we make prayer shawls. After receiving Father Eschbach's blessing to go ahead with this new ministry, we recruited people through our church bulletin, and soon there were approximately 20 people involved in making shawls. We have donated prayer shawls and lap robes to the people being seen by the members of the Health Ministry and to residents at Harrison House. Some people call for shawls when they know of a friend or family member who is in need of extra comfort.

Although the original number of people in the Prayer Shawl Ministry has decreased, others have stepped in to make them, too. Last year, the teens in THE EDGE made prayer shawls as one of their service projects. These were donated to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Chester County Hospital for parents of babies in the NICU to comfort them during a very stressful time. This year, the children in LTJV did the same. We are also working on making "prayer squares" which we will leave in baskets at each worship site for people to take as they need.



If you know someone who would benefit from receiving a prayer shawl, or you're interested in making them, please contact the church office!

The recipients of the prayer shawls report a feeling of peace and comfort as they wrap themselves in the shawls. Knowing how much these shawls are appreciated by the recipients is what keeps us motivated to continue.

HEALTHY OUTREACH

by Carol Egan



In 2010, Robin McCracken saw a need for helping and visiting parishioners who, for various reasons, were unable to come to Mass. Thus, the Parish Health Ministry was born. Starting with approximately 20 parishioners, the mission of this ministry is to provide companionship and to help homebound parishioners to feel part of the parish even though they are not able to get to church. The members of this ministry accepted this mission and cheerfully started to visit approximately 40 people.

When asked "Who are these volunteers?" Our answer is "everyone." We have nurses, beauticians, barbers, teachers, journalists, secretaries, stay-at-home parents—anyone who has an interest in helping others and providing caring companionship.

What do these visitors do? In their early visits, they establish the needs of their particular parishioners; then, they provide whatever they can. Some people want to have their blood pressure taken on a regular basis, others need a ride to Mass. Still others just want someone to talk with, often about medical issues. When there is a need that can not be fulfilled by the visitor, he/she seeks out someone who can provide the help needed. Often, the visitor connects with Eucharistic Ministers to bring Holy Communion to the homebound. Once in a while, there is a special request for help, such as a ride to an appointment or a couple of hours of respite for a caregiver to get a haircut or run errands.

Starting with the first Christmas, the Health Ministry began wrapping and delivering to homebound parishioners. With the help of the parish at large, they collect and wrap small gifts—toiletries, candies, note paper, etc.—and deliver 12 to each parishioner as part of the "12 Days of Christmas" project. These gifts are always a big hit with the recipients, just knowing that their parish was thinking about them.

Sometimes the member of the ministry will remember special days—perhaps bringing flowers and a card for Mother's Day, or some cookies at Christmastime. Others might make a special meal occasionally. Still others might remember a birthday or other occasion that is special to their person. Whatever is needed and whatever the ministry member is comfortable with, that is what is done in this vital ministry. One hope of the Health Ministry is to provide Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) at each worship site. Robin McCracken has been working on acquiring funding for this important addition to our church. Hopefully, this will happen soon.

If you have an hour now and then to provide some companionship and caring conversation, there is always room for you in this ministry. Or if you know someone who would appreciate a visit from a member, please contact the church office. Any ministry is only as active as its members, and this has proven to be one of the most vital ministries in our church.





HEALTH MINISTRY by Carol Egan

been making chemo caps for cancer patients and donating them to those undergoing treatment. At one of our meetings in 2010, Nancy McNamara proposed that we go ahead with this new ministry, we recruited people through our church bulletin, and soon we donated prayer shawls and lap robes to the people being seen by the members of the Health Ministry when they know of a friend or family member who is in need of extra comfort.

As demand has decreased, others have stepped in to make them, too. Last year, the teens in THE EDGE made prayer shawls as one of their service projects. These were donated to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Chester County Hospital for parents of babies in the NICU to comfort them during a very stressful time. This year, the children in LTJV did the same. We are also working on making "prayer squares" which we will leave in baskets at each worship site for people to take as they need.

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Who are these volunteers?" Our answer is "everyone." We have nurses, beauticians, barbers, secretaries, stay-at-home parents—anyone who has an interest in helping others and companionship.

What do visitors do? In their early visits, they establish the needs of their particular parishioners; then, they do what they can. Some people want to have their blood pressure taken on a regular basis, others need help with medication, and still others just want someone to talk with, often about medical issues. When there is a need that cannot be met by the visitor, he/she seeks out someone who can provide the help needed. Often, the visitor calls on the Charismatic Ministers to bring Holy Communion to the homebound. Once in a while, there is a need for special help, such as a ride to an appointment or a couple of hours of respite for a caregiver to get a break.

How do we deliver to homebound parishioners? We deliver small gifts—toiletries, cards, and prayer shawls. The "12 Days of Christmas" that their parish was thinking of.

Perhaps bringing flowers and a special meal that is special to their person. In addition, that is what is done in the Health Ministry. We are currently acquiring External Defibrillators and are currently acquiring funding for this.



Remember, in every conversation, there is always room for you in this ministry. Or if you know someone who needs help, let us know. Any ministry is only as active as its members, and this has proven to be one of the most vital.



On July 7th, parishioners turned out to celebrate St. Malachi's 175th Anniversary with a special Mass and Celtic Celebration which included Archbishop Charles Chaput and other celebrants arriving by horse-drawn carriage, delicious food and a Celtic music program performed in the fields adjoining the church.

What OLC Means to Me



Lifelong OLC parishioner, Eileen McClay Mariano, appreciates the cards and visits she has received since moving to Tel Hai Retirement Community last year. Mrs. Mariano, who recalls bringing flowers from her grandmother's garden to decorate the church altar as a girl, says, "It gives me a feeling of connection to the parish that has been so special to me and my family for so many years. Whenever I receive a card from Fr. Victor or the Health Ministry, I hang it on the wall and tell people about OLC."



FIRST COMMUNION

Father Eschbach celebrated our vibrant OLC youth with a traditional First Holy Communion ceremony this spring!



First Holy Communion is considered one of the holiest and most important occasions in a Roman Catholic person's life. It's the first time a person receives the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, which is the eating of consecrated bread and drinking of consecrated wine. As Catholics, we believe these to be the body and blood of Jesus Christ. On May 11th, Father Eschbach celebrated this special rite of passage with 29 very special boys and girls, their proud parents and welcoming members of the OLC church family. Congratulations to our Communicants and thanks to everyone who made this day so special for them!



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We are blessed to have many young parishioners involved in both their parish and their school. One such young man is Andrew Agen, a 15-year-old ninth grader at Octorara Area High School, and a dedicated parishioner. Most of us recognize Andrew as an altar server, a ministry he has participated in ever since he received First Holy Communion seven years ago. He's grown from a little guy who had trouble handling the cross to an "elder statesman" who helps mentor the newer altar servers.

In the Fall, Andrew was asked by Early Learning Center (ELC) staff to put together something to help them show the parish what's offered to young students. As a member of the original graduating class, Andrew was a natural for the job and spent a few weeks creating a DVD presentation using photos representing the students and staff who have been affiliated with the ELC. The DVD was unveiled and shown at Masses at all of the worship sites during Catholic Schools Week in January. According to Janice Dagney,

ELC Director "He asked for some pictures and it took off from there. He chose what pictures he wanted to use and set it to his choice of music. We got to see the finished project first and were overjoyed with the results. It actually brought tears to our eyes. We did get many positive comments about the "show" from parishioners, and are so very thankful for all of Andrew's time and effort!"

At Octorara, Andrew is a distance runner and a member of the soccer team. He's also very active in the Model UN Program and was selected to represent Octorara at a Model UN competition/conference held at Yale University, where he took home an Honorable Mention. Dale McCarthy, an Octorara faculty member involved in the program, said, "This was particularly impressive considering that Andrew was a freshman competing in a higher level committee. We are excited to see how he performs at these competitions in the coming years."

Andrew has college plans and hopes to major in an audio-visual/communications discipline. According to Andrew "I like the parish because I've grown up with all the same faces every week." We've enjoyed watching Andrew grow up along with us.



2013



Anniversary YEAR OF FAITH

160 TH OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION
175 TH ST. MALACHI'S OF DOE RUN

[A] Cherry Blossom Faith Pilgrimage at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC on April 6th. **[B]** St. Patrick's Day Celtic Concert at St. Malachi's. **[C]** St. Patrick's Day Celtic Concert at the Schneider Parish Center. **[D]** OLC History Night Event on March 19th. **[E]** St. Malachi's 175th Anniversary Mass and Celebration event on July 7th.



Visit us online at www.olcchurch.org for more information on upcoming events!



OUTREACH

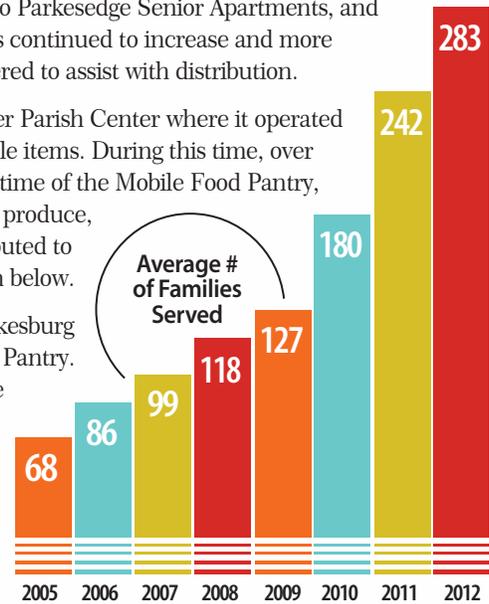
by Alan Reger

On August 18 2005, the Parkesburg Mobile Food Pantry opened in the parking lot of the former Charlie's Thriftway. At the first distribution, two employees from Chester County Cares in West Chester, along with two volunteers, distributed 2,000 pounds of food from the back of a truck to 65 needy Parkesburg residents. As the distributions continued each month, the number of clients grew. In 2006, the Mobile Pantry moved to Parkesedge Senior Apartments, and operated there until 2008. The number of clients continued to increase and more members of the Parkesburg community volunteered to assist with distribution.

In 2009, the Mobile Food Pantry moved to the Schneider Parish Center where it operated through November 2012. Fresh foods and produce were added to the non-perishable items. During this time, over 50 volunteers helped an average of 250 families served each month. During the lifetime of the Mobile Food Pantry, 9,000 pounds of food, including state, federal, and privately donated food and fresh produce, were distributed each month. This translates to over 900,000 pounds of food distributed to those in need in Parkesburg. The need has grown, as illustrated by the graph shown below.

On December 4, 2012 the Octorara Area Food Cupboard (O AFC) replaced the Parkesburg Mobile Food Pantry, returning full-circle to the original location of the Mobile Food Pantry. By expanding from once a month to two days a week and adding evening hours, the O AFC has continued to grow. The O AFC is open on Tuesdays from 10 AM to 12 Noon and from 2PM to 4 PM, and Wednesdays from 10 AM to 12 Noon and from 3PM to 7PM. For more information, call the O AFC at 610-857-4000.

Anyone in need of food may call the Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach hotline at 610-568-5835 for an emergency distribution of food. All requests for assistance are held in the strictest confidence.



Spanish Mass Gloria a Dios en el Cielo!

Since 1991, OLC has assisted in the growing effort to provide members of Chester County's Hispanic Catholic community with a place to worship God through the liturgy of their native language and customs. The Spanish Mass, once held monthly, is now held every Saturday at 7 PM in Parkesburg. Rev. Peter J. Welsh, Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph Parish, Coatesville who oversees his parish's Hispanic Ministry, began officiating this Mass in July, 2012.

"The Spanish Mass at OLC has enabled us to continue the outreach work begun by Msgr. Frank Depman (Pastor of St. Rocco's Parish in Avondale), and (the late) Fr. Nicholas Dininni," said Fr. Welsh. "It provides members of the Hispanic community who live within 5 or 6 miles of Parkesburg an opportunity to worship in their first language and experience the Sacraments through their native customs."

Average Mass attendance is between 40 and 50 people per week. Fr. Welsh says the congregation is thankful for this opportunity and the warm welcome they receive from our OLC church family. The first Quinceañera Mass – the Latin American custom marking the 15th birthday of a young Catholic woman – and the first Spanish wedding have been celebrated at OLC this summer.

Fr. Welsh believes everyone could benefit from attending the Spanish Mass. "Students learning Spanish, those interested in learning more about the Catholic customs of another culture and anyone who would like to be inspired by the devotion of our Hispanic brothers and sisters are invited and encouraged to attend." Call the Rectory at 610-857-3510 for more information.