



OLC Connection

The Joyful Family of God

Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Church · www.olcchurch.org

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A Concert for Christmas | OLC Music Ministry benefit raises \$3,000 for PCCO!

Our parish is truly blessed with wonderful musical talent and with incredibly generous people. If you were unable to attend this year's Concert for Christmas presented by the OLC Music Ministry, you missed the beautiful sounds of the season and an opportunity to give in the spirit of the season.

Under the direction of Joanne Cardine and Barbara Kovacs, the Sunday, Dec. 18th concert featured the Kids for Christ children's choir, the adult Voices of Praise choir, the LTJV Band, and the Jammin' for Jesus teen band. Also featured were soloists Brian Bonanno and Janeen Walker, along with a duet by Adrianna and Charlene McCaw.

The concert was arranged to support the Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach (PCCO) program. The \$3,000 collected in free-will donations will benefit the needy in our local community by providing funds to the PCCO for assistance with food, rent, and utilities, as well as help with shelter, housing, clothing, furniture, and household items.

Gauging from the kind comments and positive reactions of many who attended, the concert was a success in more ways than one. Followed by a friendly reception featuring an array of sumptuous desserts and appetizers provided by Music Ministry members, the Christmas concert was a truly blessed experience — for all who attended, participated and coordinated.

Our thanks to parishioner and performer Pat Lauletta for providing the beautiful photograph above. Additional photos of this event taken by Pat are available for viewing at www.olcchurch.org.



The OLC Music Ministry creates a joyful noise!

Santa Visits our Parish Children

"Santa's here! Santa's here!" That was the exclamation heard over and over again on Sunday, December 11, at the Schneider Parish Center thanks to the quick work of Gina Reid and a variety of volunteers. The jolly ole' elf himself was on hand for breakfast, family photos, and to hear each child's Christmas wish list — no matter how long!

Using 40 pounds of made-from-scratch pancake batter, 30 pounds of sausage, and gallons and gallons of milk, juice, punch and coffee, Donna Martin and her capable kitchen helpers put together a delicious breakfast enjoyed by many of our parish families, young and old, as well as by our Sunday CCD children.

Photos were taken by our photographers Sven Kovacs and Joan Agen and were emailed free of charge to all who provided an email address. Coloring pages and other activities also kept the children busy while waiting their turn with Santa.

A special thank you is due to several LTJV 6th graders who were on hand bright and early to help set up and serve the breakfast. Also, thanks to Doug Delestine, Mark & Joan Agen, Alan Reger, and our friend Patrick for help manning the grill, the ovens, and the coffee pots. All that effort made wonderful Christmas memories for all!

If you haven't received your child's Santa photo, please contact Donna at olclifetime@olcchurch.org. For more of the great pictures of the OLC Santa Breakfast taken by Sven Kovacs and Joan Agen, visit www.olcchurch.org.



Gay "Cheese!" with Santa...



Breakfast with Santa at OLC!



A Pastor's Ramblings

by Father Victor J. Eschbach

This New Year is somewhat epochal for me. This 68th year of my life marks the 50th year of my graduation from high school and the 40th year of my ordination.

Throughout all these years — the good, bad, and ugly — I feel so blessed to have spent my life in service to God's people, in North Philadelphia for 18 years, and now for 19 years in Chester and Lancaster counties. The cultures could not have been more different in terms of race, socio-economic conditions, city and country living, etc. And I have loved it all. What I have come to love most of all are not the differences between people, which are good insofar as our differences enrich us all, but the beautiful similarities among people.

The many people I have encountered share the same hopes, dreams, aspirations, hurts, disappointments, and pain. The commonality of our humanity binds us together into one communion, seeking love and fulfillment. We enter into that communion in the source and summit of life itself, God, revealed to us in Christ Jesus whose birth we have just celebrated with such great joy.

This month we celebrate the birth of another great seeker who spoke so eloquently on the commonality of our humanity, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who spoke these words upon which I have tried, and will continue to try, to live up to in my ministry and my life,

"I just want to be there in truth and in justice, in love and in commitment to others, so that together we can make of this old world, a new world."

Father Eschbach

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

All I Want for Christmas is Not My Two Front Teeth, but a Violin!

by Charlene McCaw

It was the only tag left on the Giving Tree. The only request a musically talented 10-year-old boy from Misión Santa Maria, Madre de Dios had on his Christmas list this year. His wish was not for a skateboard or new sneakers, a Wii game or a new winter coat. Yes, the Giving Tree tag read "Violin."

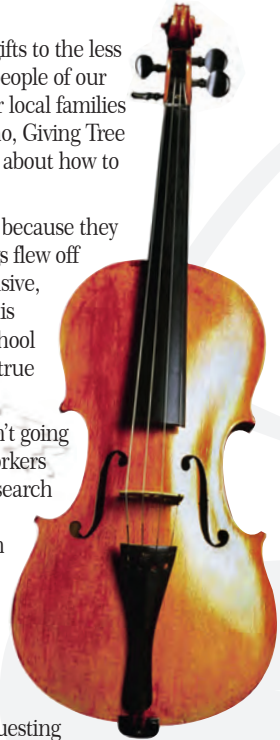
As it has in years past, OLC parish comes together during the holidays to provide Christmas gifts to the less fortunate children in our region as a part of our Giving Tree Project. This year, the generous people of our parish provided gifts for over 100 needy children at the mission and an additional 200 gifts for local families through the Parkesburg Churches Community Organization (PCCO). Yet, Mary Ellen Sannino, Giving Tree liaison for the mission, and Diane Sager, Giving Tree liaison for the PCCO, were both worried about how to find a willing volunteer for the one tag left. How or where would they find a violin?

"The Giving Tree is always well-received with everyone in our church. I get people calling me because they missed getting a tag, and it's become a family tradition to fulfill the wish of a child. So, the tags flew off the trees this year...except for one," Mary Ellen said. "It seemed no one would take this expensive, yet hopeful wish." But she had a few ideas, and began talking to friends about how to fulfill this wish. Soon, several people started discussing the possibilities — maybe a music shop, or a school band director. Or, maybe we could get the Music Ministry to contribute toward one. Then, in true OLC spirit, one couple from our parish said, "Oh, just give us the tag; we love a challenge!"

Well, a challenge it turned out to be. They quickly discovered that finding a child's violin wasn't going to be the easiest thing to do. So, the wife decided to take it to work and see if any of her co-workers could help. Soon the whole office was searching websites for used violins. Finally, a craigslist search listed a child's violin available for sale in Lancaster, PA. That evening they found themselves driving to Fruitville Pike to look at the violin, and what a beautiful violin it turned out to be! In a case with green velvet inside, it included the bow and every accessory a child would need to become a violinist. The Lancaster family was touched to hear of the boy's request. They soon agreed on a reasonable price, but now there was only one problem. The violin was missing a string.

"No problem," said the husband, "I'll take it to a music shop and get it replaced." So the next day he went to West Chester where the music store clerk loved the whole story of the boy requesting a violin and how the Giving Tree was going to make his wish come true. She tuned and polished the violin after she replaced not one, but two strings! Finally, all polished, tuned and ready to play, our parish couple brought the beautiful violin to church.

"So, now we have a real violin going out to this child, a child who believed that if he had the faith to ask, he would receive," she added. "That's what I love about the Giving Tree and the spirit of Christmas in our parish. It is truly amazing how generous people are, and how much they want to teach their own children to give back."



LTJV Visits Philadelphia Shrines

Learning More About Our Local Saints

by Adrianna McCaw

On Saturday, November 19, 2011 the sixth graders involved in the LTJV program went on a trip to the shrines of St. John Neumann and St. Katharine Drexel in Philadelphia. It was a day full of fun and learning about the saints from our area.

At our first stop, we learned about the life of St. John Neumann, watched a really interesting movie about one of his

miracles, and visited the main church where he once preached. Our guide told us that many people feel his presence on the stairsteps leading to the pulpit where he regularly preached. While at the shrine, we visited the museum to see his body entombed in a glass case and we attended Mass.

We also visited St. Katharine Drexel's Shrine where we learned about her and the history of the building. She had been one of three children of a very wealthy Philadelphia family, but gave up her pampered life and used all her money for the less fortunate. We learned about how she founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Black and Native American people, dedicating her life and fortune to building mission schools in the western and south-western U.S. We visited the beautiful chapel where she prayed with her fellow sisters. We were taken downstairs, directly below the altar, where she is buried. We were allowed to put our hands on her tomb and pray. After a Confirmation study presentation, our day was over and it was time to go. We had a fun day with our Confirmation class friends while we learned some meaningful lessons about our local saints.

Additional photos of this event are available for viewing at www.olchurch.org.



Community Outreach & Social Justice Ministry by Alan Reger

The Parkesburg Churches Community Outreach (PCCO) is a coalition of 10 area churches that provides multi-faceted social assistance and referrals to individuals and families living within the Octorara Area School District. PCCO was formed in 2003 to provide coordinated responses to requests received by the following individual member churches: Church of the Ascension, Highland Baptist, Our Lady of Consolation, Parkesburg Baptist, Parkesburg Community, Parkesburg Mennonite, Parkesburg Methodist, Parkesburg Presbyterian, Penningtonville Presbyterian and Upper Octorara Presbyterian. Funding for PCCO is provided by donations from the member churches.

While Chester County is ranked as the 27th wealthiest county in the United States, it is estimated that every day 1 in 8 people in Chester County goes hungry. To address this ever-growing need, PCCO, in alliance with the Chester County Food Bank, hosts and coordinates a Mobile Food Pantry on the 4th Wednesday of each month (except in November and December when it is held on the 3rd Wednesday) at the Schneider Parish Center.

Clients receive food items including cereal, fruit juices, eggs, canned goods, fresh vegetables, peanut butter, pasta and meats that have been donated by grocery stores, organizations and individuals. Each family received a frozen turkey in November. In addition to the Mobile Food Pantry, PCCO maintains an Emergency Food Cupboard stocked with donations from the member churches to address needs that arise between the monthly Mobile Food Pantry days. Each month, the Mobile Food Pantry provides assistance to 500 to 600 clients while the Emergency Food Cupboard helps an average of 25 additional families. On Thanksgiving morning, PCCO volunteers cooked and delivered 178 meals and distributed 20 Thanksgiving baskets to families who wanted to cook their own meal.

THE MISSION
The Parkesburg area family of churches seeks to serve the basic human needs of our community which includes, but is not limited to: food, clothing, furniture, utilities, and to do so in the name of Christ our Savior.

PCCO clients selected over 350 adult and children's winter coats and the remaining 150 coats were donated to the Community, Youth & Women's Alliance in Coatesville. PCCO also provides financial assistance in emergency situations to those who need help paying housing or utility bills. It provides referrals for clients to identify county and state programs that are available to help. In 2011, PCCO provided assistance with rent and/or utilities to 65 families. In December, PCCO member churches sponsored the annual Giving Trees that provided Christmas gifts to 240 children from 90 families.

Please contact PCCO at 610-857-5800 or the rectory if you are in need of assistance, if you would like to volunteer in this ministry or make a donation of food, furniture, clothing or money. Be assured that all requests for assistance are held in the strictest confidence.



Each month, the Mobile Food Pantry provides assistance to 500 to 600 clients while the Emergency Food Cupboard helps an average of 25 additional families.



What OLC Means To Me by Maureen White McCormick

I love looking at this photo because it was taken on the happiest day of my life, June 6, 2009, the day Joe and I were married in a ceremony officiated by Fr. Eschbach at St. Malachi's. Of all the beautiful pictures taken that day, this one in particular is special to me because it captured the moment we both knew that our journey toward becoming a married Catholic couple had been realized. The fact that it includes Fr. Eschbach, the person who guided and encouraged us throughout the process, makes this photo even more precious to me.

As we stood there that beautiful June day, surrounded by all the people closest to us wishing us well and being so happy for us, I couldn't help but think about the road that led us to that moment. Joe and I had long wanted to be married in the Catholic Church, but were both wary of beginning what we believed would be an emotionally and financially draining process of annulling Joe's prior Catholic marriage. We began going to Mass together shortly after we began dating, but had gotten into the habit of going to

different churches each week because we did not really feel a part of any particular parish. We were both drawn to return to OLC time and again and wanted to become active members of this vibrant parish, so we decided to talk to Fr. Eschbach about the possibility of getting married here.

I'm not going to say that the annulment process is an easy one. It's not, nor should it be. But having a guide like Fr. Eschbach to assist us and remove what we perceived to be barriers to the full Catholic experience turned what we thought would be a negative experience into one of the most spiritually fulfilling experiences of our lives. Sharing the altar that day with the person who helped us to begin our authentic Catholic life together — and who was as happy as we were! — was an honor and a joy we will never forget. **This is what OLC means to me.**



I am honored and delighted to serve as the new Coordinator for the OLC Connection newsletter. We have made quite a few changes to the newsletter and this regular feature, "What OLC Means To Me," is one that we hope everyone enjoys. If you would like to submit a photograph with a description of your special OLC experience (past or present) to be featured in this spot, please contact olcconnection@olcchurch.org or drop us a note in the white OLC Connection box located in the back of each worship site. We also welcome our readers' responses, suggestions for upcoming articles and are always seeking new contributors to the newsletter on either a regular or occasional basis. Thank you for helping us to make our OLC Connection a relevant and vibrant part of our parish.

~Maureen



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Cafe Corner

by Paul Harkins

Grab a fresh cup and ponder a new quote, absorb a fun fact and surf a new web site.



Did you know?

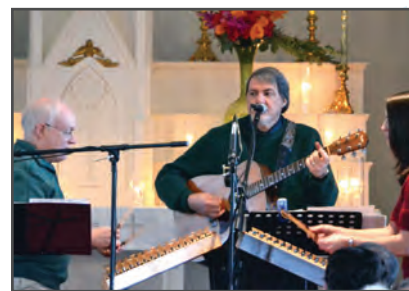
Zucchetto is the name of a Catholic's cleric skullcap. The Pope wears white, a Cardinal wears scarlet, a Bishop purple and a Priest wears black.

Site of the Month! Rediscover Catholicism — visit www.DynamicCatholic.com — a web site to inspire people of all ages.

A Celtic Christmas

Pure Magic Comes to Doe Run Once a Year!

A Celtic Christmas in Doe Run combines the strength of our Parish's history with the true joy and magic of the Christmas Season! Our two afternoon concerts at St. Malachi's — December 4th and 11th — saw attendance of over 250 people (not counting volunteers or musicians). Each concert featured sensational Celtic and Christmas music in the historic St. Malachi Church in Doe Run, which was festively decorated with greens and candlelight, followed by an array of delicious desserts, appetizers and refreshments prepared and served by Parish volunteers.



Performers on December 4th were the Jameson Sisters (harp/Celtic instruments), The Cara Dancers and the Burning Bridget Cleary Celtic Ensemble. On December 11th, Mary Kay Mann (harp/Celtic instruments), Keegan Loesel (uilleann pipe/tin whistle) and Alexander Weir (violin/fiddle), The Cara Dancers and From the Well Celtic Ensemble performed. Piper David Bailiff set the tone beautifully at the entrance to the church at both concerts.

Our thanks go to concert organizer Kathleen Hood and the many parishioners who contributed their assistance and support to make these concerts such a great success again this year! Thank you, also, to parishioner Missy Kline for providing the beautiful photograph above. Additional photos taken by Missy are available for viewing online at www.olcchurch.org.

"Man cannot live without hope.
Many hopes go down when they
crash against the rocks of life.
However, Christian hope 'does not
disappoint,' because it is based on
the solid foundation of faith in the
love of God revealed in Christ."

Quote of the month by Pope John Paul II from the
Words to Live By, The Word Among Us Press

OLC CONNECTION EDITORIAL TEAM: Maureen McCormick, Newsletter Coordinator • Paul Harkins, Café Corner • Bill Mann, Editor and Printing Advisor • Charlene McCaw, Contributing Editor • Alan Reger, Contributing Editor • Marty Sannino, Parish Website Administrator • Adrianna McCaw, Contributor • Rev. Victor J. Eschbach, Pastor • Joy Cobler, moxielNK Design, Graphic Designer

The OLC Connection newsletter is a monthly to bi-monthly publication depending on church events and news. Our team wishes to thank all the people who assisted us in preparing this edition. If you would like to join our team, please contact us at olcconnection@olcchurch.org.