

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Fall

Oct-Nov-Dec 2018

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



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Fr. Peter's Note

Rev. Peter Russo, Pastor

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

"We give thanks to God always for all of you... calling to mind your works of faith and labor of love and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ..."
1Thessalonians 1:2-3

With these words St. Paul greeted the people of the Church in Thessalonica. As pastor of St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Grace for a number of years now, I can share St. Paul's praise for the Catholic communities of Scotia and Burnt Hills Ballston Lake area. The compassionate outreach of the O.L.G. community during the recent tragedy is just one example.

The reports that follow, in this Newsletter, will give you a view of what has been done over the last year of ministry, through your generous contributions of Time, Talent and financial resources. In order for the work of our Lord to continue, I along with our bishop, urge you to reflect on your commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and the good stewardship of His gifts to you.

PLEASE HELP!

For most of us a life of stewardship represents an enormous transition from secular values. Some of the parishioners are very involved with the parish, others are striving to increase their commitment. We hope that you will take the time to prayerfully reflect on this annual report. I pray that each member of the community will TAKE ANOTHER STEP in their spiritual development.

I wish to thank each and every parishioner for your prayerful reflection on this report and for the commitment you plan to make.

Sincerely,

Fr. Peter

OLG Mission Statement

We are a welcoming community of believers, being disciples of Christ through worship, the Sacraments, ongoing faith formation, evangelization and Christian service to others!

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MY WALK WITH GOD

by Pam Dintrone



After I retired from teaching, I felt called to service. One day I was talking to Sr. Madeline after morning Mass, and she told me of her upcoming retirement and the homebound ministry. She was in the process of matching the people she visited with visiting ministers. She asked me if I would be comfortable bringing communion to an autistic man.

Since I was open to that, we made my first homebound visit together. Mr. G. was in his 60's and suffered from Parkinson's disease and autism. Communication was difficult, and he was not comfortable with change. He needed to feel comfortable with me taking Sr. Madeline's place. I respected Mr. G.'s space and took subtle, gradual steps to get closer to him. With God's grace, he began to trust me and we have developed a safe connection. There is something very comforting about praying the Our Father with Mr. G. and distributing Communion to him that we both find very settling. I am now able to give him a hug and kiss goodbye....he smiles and tells me when he is happy. This has been so rewarding.

Sr. Madeline also introduced me to Mrs. C., a sweet woman in her 80's from Italy who spoke English with difficulty. Unable to see out of one eye, she only has limited vision in the other. I was concerned about our ability to communicate, but despite all obstacles, God has worked through both of us and we are able to have quality visits. I have a love for her and respect her deeply rooted family traditions. My husband's father was also born in Italy, and this created a special bond between us. She lights up when I talk about him and his family. Of course, sharing food is one of her deeply rooted traditions. She is always giving me something to take home to Bob, especially Italian Christmas cookies or rice pie at Easter. Sometimes her poor health shortens our visits, but most times we are able to sit and be present to one another for about an hour. It's wonderful to pray together and offer her Communion. What a gift God has given me through her!

A year ago, I was asked to visit a woman whose cancer had progressed to Hospice care. I felt unsure, but prayed about it and felt led to meet her. That first day, Mrs. O. and I spent a special hour together, talking, praying and sharing Eucharist. I had the pleasure of visiting her for almost 8 months. I loved hearing her stories, especially the one where she and her husband met in a cow barn. Both families were dairy farmers. She lived in a ranch house on a parcel that had been carved out of the expansive farmland she and her husband used to own. She lived there right up to a few short weeks before her passing.

Mrs. O. treasured her rural heritage and loved the horses and cows they owned. When I visited her gravesite, I was stunned by her gravestone. It displayed a laser engraved scene with a beautiful farm setting, including the cow barn where she and her husband first met! I treasure the time we had together, and still think of her and her stories almost every day.

I began the homebound ministry to try and be the hands and feet of Christ to those in need. However, what I have received in return has been God's gift to me. I sincerely love my homebound parishioners and feel God's love for me through them. Their personalities, their stories, their faith, their courage and their perseverance have deeply enriched my own faith. The homebound ministry has been a blessing for me, as well as for those with whom I share not just the Eucharist, but companionship and love. I am truly grateful that God has woven our lives together in such a fulfilling and beautiful way!

Helping Hands:

Soon the holiday season will be upon us. Helping Hands will be doing food baskets for both Thanksgiving and Christmas, and presents for Christmas. The giving tree will be going up around Thanksgiving and with your help, all of the gift tags will be taken. The gifts will be distributed to four different organizations. It is vital that you return presents on time and have the tag attached. The tag helps us deliver the gift to the correct family or organization. For food baskets we give gift certificates to purchase meat, produce, etc.

The only fund raiser we hold is the sale of the Christmas wreaths. This has been successful for many years thanks to your generosity. If you wish to be a small or large part of this ministry, call or contact Mary Ellen Hickey at 518-399-5031 or mehickey36@gmail.com

Helping Hands
End of the Year Statement
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Balance as of July 1, 2017 **\$ 7,518.65**

Income

Donations, fundraising, etc.
and OLG operating budget \$ 9,898.64

BHBL Summer Lunch
Program from 6 local churches
And OLG \$ 5,459.00
Total Income **\$15,357.64**

Expenses

Rent/Security deposit (**41 families**) \$ 4,720.07
Utilities, including telephone (**5 families**) 463.52
Car repairs/payments/insurance/gas (**2 families**) 153.70
Groceries (gift certificates & summer lunch) 5,727.62
Misc., wreaths, backpack pr 2,737.07
Total Expenses **\$ 7,518.65**

Balance as of June 30, 2018 **\$9,074.31**

Regular Helping Hands 1,028.69
Thanksgiving and Christmas food/gifts 3,886.20
Summer lunch program funded by 7 churches 4,159.42
\$9,074.31

Healthy Bones for Life

By Mary Salm

‘Healthy Bones for Life’ is an osteoporosis exercise program that promotes education for good health and exercise for strengthening bones. The group began at Our Lady of Grace as “The Osteo Group” in 2001, under the supervision of Sunnyview Hospital, with guidelines and training provided for group leaders. Group leaders are retrained yearly. The program includes warm-ups, exercises with arm and leg weights, and closing with stretch cool down exercises. Use of weights depends on participant’s ability.

Throughout the many years, participants have enjoyed improved fitness and balance, experienced unexpected laughter and fun, and formed lasting friendships. Most importantly, participants have come to recognize their bone density scores have increased or stabilized as they participated in the program.

The ‘Healthy Bones for Life’ is offered at several sites in the Capital District, such as area churches, retirement communities and senior citizen centers. It is not necessary to be a parishioner, the program is open to anyone interested in joining. There is no registration or monthly fee. Currently, there are 11 participants, who meet at Our Lady of Grace, twice weekly as their schedule allows.

The group meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 9:15 – 10:15 a.m., in Rm 5 & 6. Call Lynn Bievenue at (518) 399-1307, for additional information. Invite a friend, and come join us for an hour of improved health.



Kids Korner

Autumn Fun



From the heart

We all need people who share godly wisdom with us.

Directions: First, unscramble the bold letters to spell another word for "pal." Write that word in the first empty row. Then move the words under each bold letter to that letter's new column. The result will be Proverbs 27:9, NIV.

D	E	F	I	R	N
F					
to	bring	Perfume	incense	and	joy
Perfume					
of	the	the	and	heart,	pleasantness
the					
advice.	their	a friend	from	springs	heartfelt
A friend					

It's been a month since you started back to school and hopefully, you are in the groove. No more "sleepin' in" during the week. Instead, you are diving your head into the books, and back on schedule with sports and other activities!

Fall is a fun time, with Halloween and Thanksgiving holidays peeking around the corner. Pumpkin carving, tricks or treats, corn mazes, pumpkin pies and that wonderful smelling turkey on Thanksgiving.

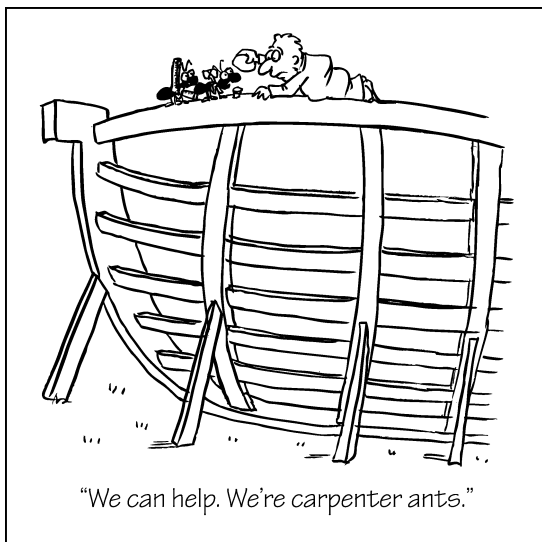
(Speaking of Halloween: —What happens if you get scared half to death twice???? Hmmmm, food for thought!)

Sometimes schedules mean stress for you and the family. This is also a time for being aware of how your parent(s) make many sacrifices for your sake.

By being observant, you can help move things along more smoothly. Take control of those little jobs that you can accomplish for them. Such effort will help "you grow up" in small ways, while showing other family members you love and care for them. Life is not just about you, it's about the family unit and how we embrace each other.

Wishing you a happy fall as you "fall in love with all those around you in little ways"! WWJD?

Answer: F R I E N D; Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice. Proverbs 27:9, NIV



What has ears but cannot hear?

A cornfield!!!!

(Corny, or what!?)

"Have a safe Fall"



I volunteered to help OLG because...by Paul Fanning

In the summer of 2017, Fr. Peter Russo made an appeal for volunteers for the parish council during mass. This was something I had long been considering and realized the time was now. In July 2017, I retired from State Farm Insurance after working 5 years at the Ballston Spa Operations Center close to Exit 12 off I-87. This was my second career after leaving the NY National Guard in June 2011 after serving 34-years, 22 years full-time. Having turned 62 in June 2017, it was time for me to spend more time helping my wife cope with her health challenges, while also volunteering in service organizations that mean a lot to me.

Ten years ago, I was in Afghanistan with 1,700 other members of the NY Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Our team was leading a task force of nearly 8,000 US and coalition service members, training and mentoring the Afghan Army and Police, supporting various ministries as the Afghans sought to reform their government, rendering Humanitarian Assistance and nation-building efforts. I was the task force Public Affairs Officer.

Our official activation date was Monday, January 21, 2008. I reported to the Syracuse Armory the Friday before, but the previous Sunday I attended the 10:15 mass at OLG. I did not know it, but my wife had previously called the church and asked for a blessing for me during the mass.

Near the end, Fr. Jack stepped forward on the altar and called me up. There before all, he blessed me and explained to all what was happening. To this day, when the congregation brings our petitions during the Prayer of the Faithful, and we ask for the protection of our nation's service men and women, I fondly remember January 13, 2008 and the very personal blessing I received from this community. And, it turns out, I really needed it.

There is so much to talk about, but for brevity's sake I can report that our team performed brilliantly, earning a Joint Meritorious Service Medal from the Department of Defense, which is an extraordinary accomplishment. However, we lost 43 US service members including 15 National Guard members – 8 of them from NY. Yes, I knew them. I came to know many others before their deaths as well. I served as the narrator for the 18 Memorial Services we held at Camp Phoenix, the main base of our task force.

We were all tested. We all felt the daily stress of the mission, while witnessing the desperate poverty of the Afghan people and their torment at the hands of the Taliban. We did all we could to bring aid and help establish the rule of law. None of us returned the same as when we left home. Veterans who served in a designated combat zone will tell how much more they have come to appreciate what Americans have here in the quality of life, the safety, the freedoms and opportunities, which most generally seem to take for granted.

Note from OLG community: Thank you Paul, for extending your heartfelt volunteerism to our parish.

The Theme by Janet Troidle

Each quarter, the OLG newsletter seems to take on a theme of its own. Volunteerism stands out in this issue. It's about the beautiful people who make up our community and what they do as they serve the Lord and each other.

Our Church is suffering on a global level. We are encouraged to not become disheartened, to be a laity of faith and action in Christ Jesus. If we stay focused on our "little mission", God will provide for the healing of His Church in His time.

Let us keep our little mission alive with our time, talent and treasure!

What is the role of pastoral council members?

Members of the parish council support the pastor's mission by studying aspects of the pastoral situation, reflecting on them and recommending conclusions to help the pastor advance the mission of the church.

Discussion, discernment and consensus building are at the heart of the council's work. For this reason, the council seeks new members every year to contribute thoughtful input for the benefit of the faith community through monthly meetings, email messages and phone calls as needed. The parish council is an advisory board, not a decision-making activity.

Our Lady of Grace Church
Financial State of the Parish
for the period July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018



	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>
Summary of Operating Income		
Collections	\$345,635	\$334,012
Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings	1,390	2,250
Interest, Parish House Rental	12,223	12,374
Bulletin Advertising Income	996	957
Faith Formation Fees	4,980	5,560
Mass Stipends, Evangelist Receipts	2,029	2,251
Gift Cards & Coffee Sales, Misc.	16,029	12,250
Donations (restricted & non-restricted)	6,869	4,112
Reimbursements	<u>6,871</u>	<u>8,486</u>
Total Income	\$397,022	\$382,252
Summary of Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	\$237,002	\$223,866
Church Expenses	111,439	103,932
Outreach Expenses	6,323	8,542
Parish House & Rectory Expenses	7,199	10,527
Faith Formation Expenses	15,283	11,889
Additional Payments to Diocese	<u>5,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>
Total Expenses	\$382,246	\$383,756
Net Operating Total for OLG	\$ 14,776	\$ (1,504)
Boiler Campaign		
Income	\$ 28,937	N/A
Expense	<u>25,812</u>	
Reserve	\$ 3,125	
Annual Diocesan Collections		
(Catholic University, Rice Bowl, Holy Father, etc.)	\$ 6,626	\$ 8,255
Bishop's Appeal		
Assessment	\$ 75,167	\$ 90,917
Payments	\$ 77,421	\$ 90,505
	\$ 2,254	\$ (412)

The parish owes the Diocese \$29,427 from past shortfalls in the Bishop's Appeal.

Approved by the Finance Committee: R. Carusone, L. Feeser, J. Lorenc, T. McNamara, D. Merchant, Fr. Peter Russo, P. Salm, K. Wacksman

Wow!....

take an admiring glance at what some of the OLG ministries are doing:

Volunteer Baking Ministry: has been called to assist with many occasions such as after Mass hospitality, bake sales, religious celebrations (i.e. First Communion), funerals, and milestone moments like Fr. Jack's 50th anniversary. Our team consists of a list of people who enjoy baking and are willing to contribute their time and talent to make their delicious baked goods. We also like to offer fruit, veggies, dips, chips for those folks who can't enjoy baked goods because of allergies, etc. We always welcome new members so we are not calling the same volunteers too often.

Anyone interested in baking, or offering non-baked items, help with calling the bakers' list, or helping serve an event, please call Bunny Hennessy @518-877-5996. **Also, if you and/or family can host hospitality after Mass one or two week-ends per month, the community would be most grateful.**

CROP Hunger Walk: We had ten walkers this year (difficult weather), and with your generosity, raised 794.00, supporting SICM. It is fun and rewarding to join other denominations walking for hunger. **Hope to see you next year!** Chris Costigan 518-884-2943

Busy Hooks and Needles: For the past year, our group of 6+ ladies (several work at home) were busy donating their skills, knitting, crocheting and sewing. **We have used donated items of yarn and material** to create our hats, mittens, scarfs, afghans, and now quilts, plus many more items that we have sold during the Christmas season and at our spring festival. This past year we sold for over \$800 worth of goods, which was donated to the Helping Hands. We meet on Mondays, 10:00 - noon at OLG. We are always looking for people to join us, as well as donations of unused fabrics, yarn. Give us a try! If you have any questions, reach me at sandywedge75@gmail.com, or 518 399-5351.

Coffee Sales: We have a small team of six volunteers who sell fair trade coffee after Masses on the second weekend of each month. Our coffee is purchased through the Earth Friendly Foundation and supports the indigenous Mayan coffee growers in Guatemala. The sale of fair trade coffee has been part of the Social Justice Ministry of OLG since 2004. We sell 260-280 pounds of fair trade coffee per year at \$12.50 per pound which covers the wholesale price of the coffee plus the cost of shipping. We are grateful for the support of our "regular customers" and **would love to add a few people to the coffee team, especially for the sale after the Saturday evening Mass.** **If you can help in any way,** call Liz Marcinko 518-583-4814 or dldarcinko@earthlink.net

SICM Schenectady Inner City Ministry: Serving meals to the homeless. Some have asked about the dates for 2019 which I have just received: Tuesday 11/13/18, Tuesday 1/22/19, Tuesday 4/23/18, Tuesday 6/4/19, Tuesday 10/15/19. For more info to volunteer, contact Marty St.Amand, 518-441-0378.

Regional Food Bank: September 2017 – August, 2018, 25 parishioners from Our Lady of Grace volunteered at the Regional Food Bank for a total of 206 hours. Volunteers carpool from Our Lady of Grace at 4:15 pm. on the fourth Tuesday of the month, at the Regional Food Bank, 5 – 7 p.m. To volunteer, call Mary Salm at (518) 882-9313.

OLG "other" Statistics July 2017-June 2018

Baptisms—10
Rite of Christian Initiation—3

First Eucharist—13
Confirmation—16
Marriage—1
Funerals—6
Homebound/nursing home—14

Registered Households—582
Faith Formation Program: Grades 1-5—43
Grades 6-11—100

Average Attendance 5:30 p.m. Mass—115
Average Attendance 10:30 a.m. Mass—151





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Note From Editor:

We welcome your comments, suggestions and contributions. We would like to use this newsletter to share the faith and Christian action of our parishioners. Please send stories about your ministry, e-mail photos; tell us about a person, or bible passages which have had a positive influence on you or your family, your poetry, your journey.

We are published quarterly, with deadlines as follows:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Jan-Feb-Mar	Nov 25
Apr-May-Jun	Mar 1
Jul-Aug-Sept	Jun 1
Oct-Nov-Dec	Sept 1

Our Cluster Parishes:
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<http://www.stjosephschurchscotia.net>
Immaculate Conception Website:
<http://www.ic-glenville.com/>

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You can access the weekly bulletin and this newsletter with all current parish activity at:

<http://www.olgchurchbl.org>