

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Summer

Jul-Aug-Sep 2019

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



Inside this issue:

My Walk With God By Ed Jeram	2
-Pastoral Council News By Paul Fanning -Food Bank by Mary Salm HHands Needs Help!	3
Kids' Page Nurse's Corner	4
-Financial Report -A Call to the Eucharistic Ministry By Pat Parker	5
-Salvation Army by Joyce Martucci -Gardeners of Grace seek your hands -Helping Hands Update By MaryEllen Hickey	6
-Faith Formation by Roberta Quinn -Youth Ministry by Grace Fay	7
Staff and Pastoral Council Information	8



HEAR YE HEAR YE!

Fellow Parishioners:

On the weekend of June 8, 9 we heard Fr. Peter announce that his request for retirement was accepted by Bishop Ed. We are writing to let you know what that means for us at OLG.

A little background: there are 126 parishes in the Albany Diocese being covered by 78 active priests. The end of June will see 4 other parish leaders retiring. Fr. Peter retires on September 30. The diocese has been assisting parishes when a priest retires or accepts another assignment.

We the undersigned met with Deacon Frank Berning, Director of Pastoral Planning for the diocese. He outlined for us the plan that the diocese has been using to support parishes whose pastor is retiring or being transferred for another assignment.

An interim team consisting of a priest and administrator will be assigned to the parish during a transitional period. This team will be in place for a period of 3 to 9 months. The interim priest, probably not his only assignment, will celebrate weekend Mass and when available other sacraments.

The administrator will most likely be available for a day a week in an oversight capacity. The administrator will assist us in making connections with diocesan resources to address our needs. The administrator will coordinate drafting a parish profile of OLG with our input regarding parish needs and our ties with St. Joseph's Parish in Scotia. We will commit to keeping you up to date. For now we need to support Fr. Russo and continue to strengthen our parish.

Sincerely in Christ,

John Lorenc, Polly VanNostrand, Trustees
Paul Fanning, Chair, Pastoral Council

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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!

My Walk With God

By Ed Jeram



In July 2016, I deleted my inbox and saved my deleted box. This strange event reinforced my journey of trust in the Lord. I visited my GP, and he immediately directed me to Ellis Hospital. He assumed I was having a stroke because the right side of my face was drooping. The MRI revealed a 1 ½” tumor in the front of the brain, and the neurosurgeon opined that it was benign meningioma. I was uneasy about this diagnosis and the Holy Spirit directed me elsewhere for further diagnosis. With Deacon Frank’s help, I pursued referrals at Albany Med. I chose the top physician on the list, Dr. D. Semenoff, and was amazed when he himself answered his phone. Was this coincidence? I think not. He explained he was giving his secretary a short break, and my timing was excellent. He just received a cancellation, which I filled with deep appreciation. At that visit, Dr. S. diagnosed the MRI taken at Ellis and assured me that the tumor was indeed cancerous and needed to be removed immediately (since it had grown significantly in the last three years, comparing to old MRI.)

Surgery lasted perhaps four hours, according to my family. The biopsy indicated the tumor to be Primary Lymphoma CNS (central nervous system). This was actually a cancer of blood, for which there was a chemotherapy treatment that was effective in 70% of the cases. So I pursued this plan of treatment for 14 weeks with poor results. My kidneys failed and I developed neuropathy in both feet. This was such a difficult time for me. Ardith, my wife, has with me every step of the way. Although I was feeling discouraged, I somehow knew that God had something more in store for me.

In the meantime, my son Kevin, researched his computer and found a Primary Lymphoma CNS trial starting at Dana Farber in Boston, March 2017. He contacted Dr. Lakshmi Nayak at the Center for Neuro-Oncology and set up an appointment the following Wednesday. Because of my age, she was not able to get me into this trial. However, she had a patient in my age bracket with the same diagnosis, who had done well on nivolumab (immunotherapy)-in fact, he was in remission. I went into Dana-Farber in a wheelchair. I was not in good shape. The new MRI indicated the tumor was growing again. I welcomed another opportunity to deal with this grisly growth in my head.

Dr. Nayak decided to shrink the tumor with pinpoint radiation, as opposed to whole brain radiation. This took place over 5 days, with no side effects. She kindly convinced the drug company which produces Optivo to approve its use for me based on the success of patient #1 (previously only FDA approved for lung cancer.) I started treatment 3-2017, and the tumor has shrunk to the size of a dime. It is not growing and I feel so much better. From wheelchair, to walker, to a cane, and now walking on my own, I feel so blessed that this 2.5 year regimen is working for me. One week on, one week off, all of us working in uncharted waters. (I am hopeful that one day I will be referred to as patient #2.)

During this entire ordeal, I never had a thought or feeling that I would die. Somehow I knew that Christ was walking with me. Look at the number of “coincidences” that led me to write this testimony today. I am so very grateful to the parishioners of OLG for your prayers and support. Please believe me when I say that I have felt and benefitted from your sustenance. I especially wish to thank my wife, Ardith, Deacon Frank Thomas for his professional direction, and also Patti Shepherd, Joyce Boice and Sue Cafariella for the letters of encouragement. Knowing that I had and still have the support of this OLG community has kept me going for the past 2+ years. God bless you and please, “keep those prayers coming”!!!

CALLING ALL PARISHIONERS

On the first page of this edition of “Our Christian Walk,” we outlined the transition OLG will be facing as Fr. Peter nears his retirement from active ministry and beyond. We believe that as a community we will need to step up to make things happen, we will need to shoulder more of the responsibility – think **volunteer**. As you read this newsletter you will notice plenty of opportunities for your participation in our parish life.

Additional opportunities abound. Consider the following;

A retirement celebration for Fr. Peter after his last Mass in September

OLG’s Centennial Anniversary is quickly approaching (2022). Ideas need to be considered and plans made for this yearlong celebration.

Grounds work – we need some volunteers to do some weed-whacking and tree removal.

Your Pastoral Council Members are looking for your ideas, input and willingness to volunteer. Our email addresses and phone numbers can be found on the back outside cover of this newsletter. In the past this community has risen to challenges and we are sure, with the Lord’s help, we can do it again.

Polly Van Nostrand and John Lorenc, Trustees
Paul Fanning, Pastoral Council Chair

Update from the OLG Parish Council

By Paul Fanning



With the arrival of spring and summer, OLG has launched the annual Bishop's Appeal in May while planning and coordination continues for the Re-Ignite the Faith Campaign, which will soon follow. There is an important difference between each which the council feels all parishioners need to be aware of.

The Bishop's Appeal is built around a financial assessment that each parish in the diocese must meet in order to fund and fulfill diocesan-wide obligations. OLG and its membership benefit both directly and indirectly from the many programs which the appeal supports. Shortfalls in a parish's donation levels become a debt and is carried forward. Each parish is responsible for making up shortfalls. For this reason, parishes try to reach or exceed assessed goals during the annual campaign period.

The Re-Ignite the Faith campaign is very different. Parishes have goals to reach and 70 percent of the proceeds are to be used in the parish to meet specific objectives. There is no assessment from the diocese under this effort. Shortages in the stated goal will limit the parish's ability to complete an objective but there is no debt incurred.

As reported in our last newsletter, Fr. Peter Russo sent a letter in March to the Bishop seeking permission to retire by his 70th birthday near the end of September. The Bishop has given him the OK! Congratulations Father! The parish council has reached out to the diocese pastoral planning office to begin a dialogue about how the administrative needs of OLG can be addressed going forward. The council will report further on this as information is obtained.

Our membership is listed on the back page of this newsletter. If you have questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Helping Hands Needs Help!

Helping hands is looking for volunteers for the summer lunch program. The program will run from July 1st to Aug 9th. Last year we made over 2000 lunches over six weeks.

We need volunteers to make lunches and deliveries. Please call Mary Ellen Hickey asap at 518-399-5031 for more information. Donations for the program are always welcome.



OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Regional Food Bank

By Mary Salm

Have you ever considered volunteering at the Regional Food Bank? Your commitment can be a one-time experience, or a monthly ministry. Over the years, parents and grandparents have volunteered with their children and grandchildren, setting an example of "helping others" as a family.

From January through April 2019, 19 parishioners volunteered 82 hours, sorting and packing food at the Food Bank. These foods are then distributed to agencies that serve meals to the hungry. For additional information or to volunteer, call Mary Salm @ (518) 882-9313..



KIDS' COLUMN



Note The Dragon Fly

By Janet Troidle

Have you watched the beautiful dragon flies in summer as they flit from flower to tree branch, to dancing upon water's smooth skin? They are a spiritual wonder....not "dragon" you down, but lifting you up as they pose summer's delight.

They model for us how to feel free, how to look beautiful even when they are not; to think as clearly as their transparent summer wings.

Because when we think clearly and prayerfully, we open our minds to receive the Holy Spirit's urgings, to receive God's loving direction.

Not because of anything you do, but because of who YOU ARE! Fly freely this summer!

Kids' Comment:

It is not easy to become an angel. First, you die. Then you go to Heaven, and there's still the flight training to go through. And then you got to agree to wear those angel clothes!

Matthew, age 9

Nurse's Corner by Nancy Michela RN

Men's Health-You Are Different!

Overall, Americans do live longer, but American men still do not live as long as American women. The research still cannot determine why this phenomenon occurs. The research does say that men may not take care of themselves as well as women do. Men may engage in more "risky behaviors" than women-like drinking and smoking. Men may not have a primary health care provider where women may have two (gynecologist and primary care providers).

Tips for men to care for themselves:

1. See health care provider once a year.
2. See primary care provider promptly when not feeling well.
3. Take ALL medications (including over-the-counter medications and supplements) to health care provider on each visit. Take medications as prescribed.
4. Get your vaccinations per CDC schedule: Influenza, Pneumonia, Shingles and Tetanus/Diphtheria booster.
5. Use sunscreen. Good for everyone!
6. Eat balanced diet.
7. Exercise to lower fall risk.
8. STOP smoking! Enough said.
9. Exercise your brain. Read, do puzzles, play card games, debate current issues.
10. Drink alcohol in moderation. Moderate drinking = 2 drinks daily for men.
11. Socialize with others. Join groups; get involved at church (hint, hint!)

More information:

Health in Aging Foundation.



Staff are always trying to keep our records up to date, but need your help. Please register/or update your email at olgchurchbl.org. We wish to keep in contact with all of our parishioners and email is one of our primary resources.

If you have not registered with us yet, please do so. We want to know who you are so we can assure you feel welcome as an important member of this community. Your input and presence is vital to our success.

Eleven Months Financial Report by Phil Salm

7/1/18-5/31/19



Total Income	\$355,670
Total Expense	<u>365,560</u>
Gain/(Loss)	(\$9,890)

The \$9890. loss shown above compares to a gain of \$11,195. for the 7/1/17-5/31/18 period. This is primarily because offertory collections are now \$28,016. less than for the July-May period of the prior fiscal year.

We have stopped making monthly payments to the Diocese for this year’s School Assessment. Our annual assessment is \$32,019, of which a balance of \$18,678 remains an OLG obligation to the Diocese.

Overall, we need increased financial support to fund parish programs and to meet our obligations to the Diocese.

COULD THIS BE YOU? A Call to Ministry ?

hmmm!

In the last issue Father Peter wrote an article “On the Eucharist,” giving us a brief history of this beautiful Sacrament given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper. We commemorate the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, and enjoy the privilege of following Jesus’ command to receive his Body and Blood at every Mass.

To facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion, the Deacon and a number of lay Eucharistic Ministers help Father. This is an important and very rewarding ministry available to all fully initiated Catholics. I asked our Eucharistic Ministers to tell me a little about what their ministry means to them. Here are their words.

“Being a Eucharistic Minister is a very humbling experience for me. It is in that moment when I feel that I am truly being the ‘eyes and hands of Christ,’ looking into the eyes of the person that I am ministering to and saying those very important words: The Body/Blood of Christ.”

“Being a Eucharistic Minister makes me feel so honored to be able to give the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ to my brothers and sisters in Christ.”

“For myself, the Eucharistic Ministry is wonderful way to feel closer to the heart of our Church, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Being a Eucharistic Minister has been and is very special to me; it is a truly special ministry.”

“I like being a Eucharistic Minister because I feel more involved in the Mass; it’s a way to serve the Lord and my Parish.”

Our Parish is in need of people who feel called to participate in this fulfilling ministry. Do you hear the call? Is Jesus asking you to serve your Parish in this way? Please prayerfully consider joining us. If you would like to learn more, please contact me – without obligation. Call me at 518-882-9099 or email at ppparker2450@gmail.com. ---Pat Parker, Eucharistic Minister Coordinator



Congratulations to Rachel Bowcutt (rt.) and Joan Suda (left) as they celebrate 10 yrs. and 20 yrs. respectively, serving the Music Ministry of Our Lady of Grace.

Patti and parishioners joined them after the 10:30 Mass to thank them for their talent, spiritual guidance and friendship. A good time was had by all, not to mention the goodies decking the table! Thanks also to those who tickle our taste buds!

SALVATION ARMY LUNCH PROGRAM

By Joyce Martucci

The Gardeners of Grace

Many of us have started to help our wonderful caretaker, Jim, spruce up our grounds. Many hands make work light. Watch for email notices...we would like to schedule garden work party end of June. Bring the kids and your garden gloves. We want to create a welcoming outdoor environment! Watch for announcement!

The ladies of Helping Hands have already started, by enhancing the entry way to parish office. Thanks to them, Dave and Ann Pierce, and anyone else who has or will contribute to this joyful ministry. Further info, call Janet Troidle, 518-399-3861 or jantroidle@gmail.com.

The Salvation Army has been running a lunch program for those in need at their Schenectady Lafayette Street facility for many years supported by volunteers from Our Lady of Grace and other organizations throughout the area. Hot nutritious lunches are provided from Monday to Friday, feeding an average of 100+ on a daily basis.

Each organization is asked to commit to one day per month. OLG has two groups of teams (4 to 5 people on a team). Group one prepares the meals in the OLG kitchen on Wednesdays (day or evening) and group two transports the food from OLG and serves the meal at the Salvation Army facility on the next day. This is a 3 to 4 hour commitment.

We had been able to keep the frequency for teams to cook or serve to twice a year but have lost many volunteers for a variety of reasons. In order for OLG to keep supporting this much needed program we are reaching out to our parishioners for your help.

The interaction with the many families and individuals that you serve is humbling and priceless and costs only a few hours of your time! Please consider joining one of our teams and help make a difference in people's lives.

Men and Women, if you are interested or want to get more details about this very worthwhile program, please contact Joyce Martucci at 518-312-2291 (email: jamartucci@nycap.rr.com) or Maryann Wadsworth at 518-373-5976 (email: abcmonogram@yahoo.com)



Helping Hands Update

The Helping Hands volunteers met in March and reviewed their ministry results. Thanksgiving and Christmas certificates amounted to \$4691.00. The Christmas wreath sales amounted to 2400.00. The cost of the wreaths was \$1500.00. Decorations were donated.

Helping Hands serves a variety of needs in and outside of the parish. We try to address emergency family situations, provide support to transitioning families with health/critical issues, support short term needs (rent/car care/gas), and of course, Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets and gifts.

There is \$2800.00 in a separate account to cover the summer lunch program. We are seeking help for the summer lunch program. See page 3.

Helping Hands is a rewarding and fun ministry. Perhaps you can only participate in one or two of our group adventures. If you are interested in being part of this group, contact Mary Ellen Hickey at mehickey36@gmail.com or Mary Jane McNamara at mjteeth@aol.com.

We will place your name on our email list to keep you up-to-date. Thus you can participate as your schedule allows. We look forward to hearing from you!

Faith Formation News

By Roberta M. Quinn, Faith Formation Director

Busy year! We were blessed to have three Catechumens join Our Lady of Grace Catholic community. Barbara DeCresce, her daughter, Victoria and her son Kyle. OLG welcomes the DeCresce Family.

Our Lady of Grace witnessed 18 baptisms during this year and again, were blessed by 5 of our children who received First Holy Communion. On June 23rd we will baptize three young girls from the Williams family.

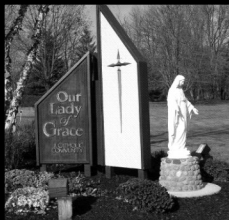
Faith Formation children took part in the Christmas pageant and living stations of the cross. We have, so far, two modules in Faith Formation program - 1. the traditional program which is on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM and, 2. our home study program. We are in the planning stages for next year... stay tuned! Blessings abound in our community of OLG!

I am seeking volunteers (men, women or young couples) for teaching religious formation, gatekeepers, adult education, RCIA teams.



Confirmation 2019 by Grace Fay, Youth Minister





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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:
Saint Joseph's Website:
<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>