

Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Fall

Oct-Nov-Dec Issue 2019

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace



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With this issue of Our Christian Walk we embark on a new journey. Fr. Peter has retired and we wish him well and pray for him in his “new” occupation. The Albany Diocese has announced the Interim Parish Team for Our Lady of Grace and St Joseph’s. The Interim Parish team consists of Fr. Jack Varno and Debra Griffith. Debra Griffith has been employed at St Joseph’s as the pastoral associate for finance. Fr. Jack will be with us each weekend for Mass and the Sacraments. He may occasionally be with us during the week for Mass or a funeral. Debra Griffith will be at OLG for 1-1.5 days a week to assist with administrative issues and assist in identifying any parish issues where the diocese needs to be more involved. “This team will work with and assist the parish and its parishioners during the time that the parish does not have an appointed pastor or parish life director.”

What does this all mean for us? The interim team will not be running the parish. Their role is to work with and assist the parish and its parishioners. The implied message is that we, the parishioners, will need to take more ownership of the parish duties not covered by the clerical staff.

We are in the unique position of making good things happen here at OLG. But it takes your input, your involvement. Do you have any suggestions to make our community more vibrant? Is there anything you would like to see added to our parish life? Do you see a need not being met in our community? Do you have a talent that can be a benefit for OLG? Don’t hold back! We need your input, your support, your time, your talents and your involvement.

Please contact us directly (info on back page of this issue) or through the parish office.

John Lorenc and Polly Van Nostrand, OLG Trustees

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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<http://www.olgchurchbl.org>

Reigniting Our Faith Campaign launch at Our Lady of Grace

By Paul Fanning
OLG Campaign Co-Chair

The diocesan-wide fund-raising campaign entitled Reigniting Our Faith has officially started at Our Lady of Grace. A first reception was conducted at Carney's Tavern in Ballston Lake on Saturday evening August 24. More than 20 parishioners joined with Pastor Peter Russo, Deacon Frank Thomas and members of OLG's campaign committee to watch a video led by the Bishop which describes and explains the purpose of the campaign.

The campaign started in the Albany Catholic Diocese back in the summer of 2017 and OLG began forming a committee and generating its Case Statement through 2018 into the Spring of 2019. Our parish will conduct outreach efforts to all members of the parish from now through the month of November. The campaign will run along a parallel path to the pastoral council and trustees' efforts to address and plan for the parish needs following the upcoming retirement of Fr. Peter and the interim period as the diocese determines who the next pastor will be.

Campaign proceeds will be shared between the diocese and our parish on a 30/70 split. **Seventy percent of the proceeds will be used to support needed improvements here at OLG in the building and parking lot. It will also be used for programs vital to bolstering OLG's ongoing Faith Formation and Evangelization efforts from our Ballston Lake home. The intent is for OLG to make the kind of improvements to better serve our parishioners now, and also set conditions which can help grow the number of people attending mass and participating in our programs in the future.**

The diocese will use 30 percent of the proceeds to help fund future vocations for the priest hood, support the fund for retired priests and support ongoing Catholic education.

The campaign here will be conducted in stages. Initially, mailed invitations are being *sent to groups of parishioners for receptions to be held immediately following masses at OLG.* This will enable the committee to make in person presentations in an organized way over a period of several weeks. In this way, parishioners will be able to hear details for themselves and then ask questions. Before the fall is over, it is hoped that every parishioner will come to know and understand the importance of the campaign and have the chance to participate. Stay tuned for more information in weekly bulletins.

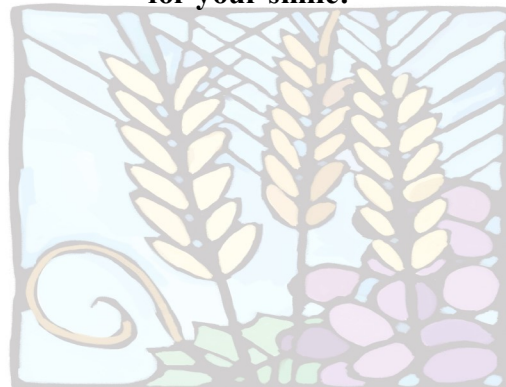
THANKS FR. JACK!

Please update the parish office with your email. This is an invaluable way for OLG staff to keep in touch with you.

**For many years, you have been there for us
in so many ways.
We are so very grateful to you for fulfilling
our spiritual needs, for your presence, your
loyalty, your commitment to priesthood, and
for your smile!**



Bringing
Christ
to the
COMMUNITY



READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Update from OLG Pastoral Council

By Paul Fanning



The OLG pastoral council met in June and August. There was no meeting in July. However, OLG trustees John Lorenc and Polly Van Nostrand and I attended a meeting at the Diocese Pastoral Planning in late June to learn about the planning process underway for identifying a successor to our pastor Fr. Peter Russo and conditions affecting our parish and others.

Following the approval of Fr. Peter's retirement in late September, council representatives were invited to meet with Deacon Frank Berning where we learned that a transition period would begin on October 1 and could last for months. In July we shared what we learned with other members of the council.

As was reported in the previous issue of this newsletter, we learned that due to the shortage of priests and the recent retirement of others, the diocese must assign an interim priest and an interim administrator to perform the normal functions of a pastor. In this way, OLG will continue to function, with changes, and more of the responsibilities of running the parish in the future will be borne by the parishioners.

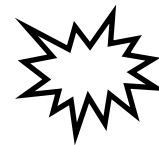
We have learned from the Diocese that the interim priest and administrator are Fr. Jack Varno and Debra Griffith. "This team will work with and assist the parish and its parishioners during the time that the parish does not have an appointed pastor or parish life director."

At the August pastoral council meeting, the available information on the transition plans was discussed. I presented an update on the launch of the Reigniting Our Faith Campaign at OLG. We received a Youth Ministry update from Grace Fay and a financial report for the end of our fiscal year. As was reported in the last newsletter, OLG is experiencing reduced numbers at Mass and the weekly offertory collections have declined. To help the parish secure a reserve, the old rectory has been placed on the market for sale. This effort is underway.

The council is focused on the future. We need to support the transition process, work productively through the interim period and complete the Reigniting Our Faith Campaign before the end of the fall. Proceeds gained through the campaign will enable the parish over time to make essential improvements to our building, our ministry programs and establish a deliberate outreach effort to grow parish life.

There is much to do. Please stay tuned.

Together we become One in Christ!



This fall the OLG Pastoral Council is extending an open invitation to parishioners to join the council. We have monthly meetings and often exchange email messages on important issues affecting our parish. Over the years the council has sought to fill vacancies every fall as serving members complete a 3 year term or when others have had to leave for various reasons.

Because of changes impacting the Albany Diocese, the shortage of priests throughout the northeast and declining mass attendance, our parish like others is seeking new approaches to help fulfill our Catholic mission. We need to tap into the spirit, vitality, skills and inspiration from you, our parish family.

We are reaching out for new members. We welcome past parish council members who would like to come back. If you are interested, or wish to nominate someone, please call the parish office and speak to Lucille. Think about what skills and abilities you have to offer to help us build and enhance our faith community!

Kids Korner

“HOW DO I DEAL WITH BULLIES”

- I was teased and bullied beginning in the fourth grade. My parents found a great counselor for me and I learned that every school has jerks who feel good about “controlling” someone else’s emotions. I have also learned to control my reactions to respond to these cretins in a calm and unconcerned way. Now, when I hear their mean words, I still get angry, but I can see what losers they are—not worth my time and energy.
—Elliott Workman, 14, Metairie, LA

- I have been both a bully and a victim. I used to get teased a lot. I thought that if I became like the people who bullied me, the teasing would stop. And, sure enough, after I joined the vicious group, it did stop. I was happy not to get teased, but I’d just made some other kid miserable. Everyone wants to fit in, so people with flaws find the flaws in you. Even though you think you are one of them, it’s only a matter of time before they see something they don’t like in you, and you’re miserable again. Now I do unto others as I would have done unto me.
—Taylor Mead, 12, Huntington Beach, CA



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BLESSINGS JAR

Thanksgiving reminds us of our many gifts from God. Count your blessings all month long with this craft.

What you need:

- Jar
- Ribbon
- Scissors
- Glue
- 3 sheets of paper (different colors)
- Marker or pen

What you do:

1. Measure and cut enough ribbon to wrap around the jar’s neck, below the lid. Glue in place and let dry.
2. Fold each piece of paper in half three times, resulting in eight rectangles per sheet. Cut along the fold lines, and you’ll have 24 rectangles.
3. Each day in November until Thanksgiving, write down one blessing from God. Then place that blessing in the jar.
4. On Thanksgiving, open the jar and read all your blessings to your family and friends.

PUZZLE

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

START *Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.*

BETHLEHEM

Regional Food Bank - Can You Give 2 Hours?

Two Hours Add Up - Parishioners from Our Lady of Grace volunteer at the **Regional Food Bank the fourth Tuesday of every month, 5-7 p.m.** Workers sort food items, personal hygiene items, or other goods that are packed and readied for distribution to shelters, food pantries, and non-profit agencies.

During the months of May, June and July, 17 parishioners volunteered 70 hours. Upcoming dates to assist at the Food Bank are **September 24, October 22, and November 26.** Consider volunteering one evening, 5-7 p.m. For additional information, call Mary Salm at (518) 882-9313,

Nurse's Corner by Nancy Michela, RN

Your home is castle. It's your safe-haven. Yet it can be a place where accidents happen. Accidents are the fifth cause of death in the US. To be safe here are some safety pointers:

HOME

- Install smoke/carbon monoxide detectors
- Lower hot water heater to safe temperature level <120F
- Secure or remove scatter rugs
- Post all emergency numbers available or program into your phone
- Have a fire escape plan from bedrooms and home-practice it
- Use a sturdy step stool for climbing or use grab tool

BATHROOM

- Use nonskid mats in tubs/shower
- Store meds in dry, cool place
- Dispose old meds
- Use bedside commode at night
- Install orange bulb in night light fixture for night

EXTERIOR

- Keep walkways clear of debris and obstructions
- Install lights in walkways and driveways
- Keep strong hand rails secure near stairs
- Keep doors locked while in and out of home

Home is where the heart is-be safe!

More information: www.cdc.gov

**WELCOME
NEW PARISHIONERS!
Delighted to have you
In our community!**

John and Constance Marcy

John and Connie are originally from Albany. John was active in both his Albany and Schenectady parishes. Health issues have caused him to pull back somewhat, but he and his wife are happy to be part of a small rural community. They visited OLG and felt very welcome!

Robert and Tina VanBuskirk and Three Sons

"We live, work and school in Ballston Lake/Clifton Park. We have been searching for a small, welcoming parish, and we found it at OLG!"



Thanksgiving Day Mass is one of the most meaningful Masses of the year as we come together in gratitude for all the gifts we share. No gifts, no pressure to do something, just BE grateful. (Watch the bulletin for time and location!) Thanksgiving is not just a forthcoming feast day! It is daily awareness!



**Our Lady of Grace Church
Financial State of the Parish
for the period July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019**

	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>
Summary of Operating Income		
Collections	\$315,916	\$345,635
Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings	2,625	1,390
Interest, Parish House Rental	10,235	12,223
Bulletin Advertising Income	94	996
Faith Formation Fees	5,490	4,980
Mass Stipends, Evangelist Receipts	1,534	2,029
Gift Cards & Coffee Sales, Misc.	10,394	16,029
Donations (restricted & non-restricted)	4,545	6,869
Reimbursements	<u>29,669</u>	<u>26,704</u>
Total Income	\$380,502	\$416,855*
Summary of Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	\$268,052	\$262,802
Church Expenses	99,867	108,003
Outreach Expenses	2,324	6,323
Parish House & Rectory Expenses	8,786	4,668
Faith Formation Expenses	14,950	15,283
Additional Payments to Diocese	<u>3,571</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Total Expenses	\$397,550	\$402,079*
Net Operating Total for OLG	(\$ 17,048)	\$ 14,776

We stopped making payments to the Diocese for the school assessment. Our assessment for FY 2018-2019 was \$32,019, of which a balance of \$18,678 remains an OLG obligation to the Diocese.

Annual Diocesan Collections

(Catholic University, Rice Bowl, Holy Father, etc.)	\$ 6,416	\$ 6,626
Bishop's Appeal Assessment	\$ 73,219	\$ 75,167
Payments	\$ 76,820	\$ 77,421
	\$ (3,601)	\$ 2,254

**Approved by the Finance Committee: L. Feeser, J. Lorenc, T. McNamara,
Fr. Peter Russo, P. Salm, P. Van Nostrand, K. Wacksman**

***FY 2017-2018 Income and Expense accounts have been adjusted to be consistent with new accounting procedures implemented in FY 2018-2019 for shared services. Gain amount of \$14,776**



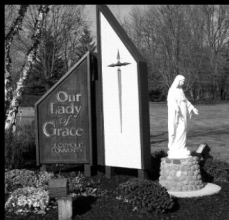
Helping Hands
End of the Year Statement
 July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Helping Hands regular		\$1,029
Thanksgiving & Christmas		3,886
Summer lunch program		4,159
Beginning Balance - July 1, 2018		\$9,074
 Income		
OLG donations, sale of wreaths, OLG operating budget	\$6,314	
BH-BL summer lunch program-6 local churches & OLG	<u>1,027</u>	
		\$7,341
 Expenses		
Rent/Security deposit (11 families)	\$1,050	
Utilities (1 families)	193	
Car repairs/insurance/gas (2 families)	200	
Thanksgiving & Christmas food gift cards/groceries	1,340	
Wreaths	1,500	
Miscellaneous	<u>273</u>	
		(4,556)
Transfer to BH-BL summer lunch program account		(5,186)
Balance as of June 30, 2019		<u>\$6,673</u>
Regular Helping Hands		\$4,578
Thanksgiving & Christmas		<u>2,095</u>
		<u>\$6,673</u>

Helped **45 families** for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets. Gave out a total of **280 Christmas gifts** from the Giving Tree. Summer lunch program with financial and volunteer support served over **2,478 lunches** for up to **98 children** during the six-week program.

OLG other statistics - July 2018-June 2019

Baptisms - 21 Rite of Christian Initiation - 2 First Eucharist - 7 Confirmation - 16 Marriage - 2 Funerals - 8 Homebound/nursing home - 12	Registered households - 563 Faith Formation Program Grades 1-5 - 35 Grades 6-11 - 86 Average 5:30 p.m. Mass - 86 Average 10:30 a.m. Mass - 177
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Twitter: @OLGraceChurch

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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>