


Our Christian Walk

The Gazette Of Grace

Spring

Apr-May-Jun Issue 2020

Serving The Community Of Our Lady Of Grace

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HE IS RISEN, ALLELUHIA!

Janet Troidle

*What an unusual Easter this has been for all of us.
We were invited to celebrate Christ's Resurrection in the church of our hearts and homes!
As Christ died and rose to save us, we too are especially called to rise above the fear and stress of the pandemic: and become His hands and feet in a world crying for help, consolation and hope.*

*We can do this! We can allow change to be the master of new beginnings!
With faith in the God of love, we embrace the unknown as gift.
"For we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Cor 5:7*

*This is our quiet time
To relearn who we are
To pray for compassion and confidence: trusting that the Lord will indeed bring us through this difficult time.*

*This is the time to reassess our values and recommit
To becoming new apostles for The Risen Lord.
Indeed, we have been called
To recognize
That we are one in each other,
We are all one in Him.*

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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 Faith Journey

By: Claire Pelletier-Hoblock

My story begins at the mere age of four months old when I was rejected by the Catholic Church. Apparently it's because I have two moms or something like that. Anyways, they moved on and I ended up being baptized in the Methodist church. We never went to church when I was a kid because what was the point if we couldn't practice the religion we wished.

Flash forward thirteen years and I find myself attending mass on a regular basis at a Catholic Church. This part of the story started at my cousin Eli's baptism that was at Our Lady of Grace. Something about the choir singing, the atmosphere, and Father Jacks homily made me feel like I belonged here. I probably should have a grudge against the Catholic Church since they did reject me all those years ago, but I believe that people can change and that everyone deserves forgiveness. As Colossians 3:13 would say, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

At the late age of fourteen I started my faith journey with my amazing Youth Minister, Grace. A little background information, I live in Schuylerville, yes a forty minute drive. A lot of people ask, why do my mom and I drive all this way when we could just go to a church in Schuylerville? The simple answer is that teenagers these days are super judgy, so I thought the only way I would feel comfortable converting is if it was in a church where I knew absolutely nobody. Turns out my science teacher goes to this church too, but she understands it better than my friends.

Thanks to Grace, I caught up on ten years of church school in 1 year. Just like that I started regular classes, made new friends that know nothing about me, and started understanding this faith. At the age of fifteen I had my first Reconciliation and on Easter Sunday of 2019 I had my first Communion, proudly in front of fifteen members of my family.

The Youth Ministry program has had a profound impact on my life. When I started my faith journey, I knew very little about the catholic faith and I didn't really understand God. Through the Youth Ministry program I have learned so much about this faith and about God. My relationship with God has grown over the years since I first joined Our Lady of Grace and now I include God in my everyday life. I do things like pray before bed and before a sports game, I also taught myself a few prayers and how to pray the rosary. I am very proud of where I am today with God and with my faith. I will be forever thankful for the people at Our Lady of Grace and my Youth Minister Grace. But I am especially thankful for my parents who have supported me throughout my journey and for my Grandma who is always there for me.

I can't wait to see where God leads me in the future. After high school I plan on going into the military, specifically the Navy, but I believe that God has a plan for all of us, so I don't know where he will lead me. All I know is that everything happens for a reason.



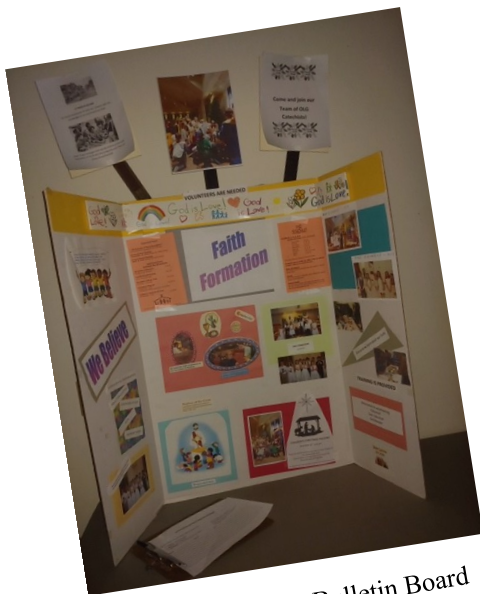
FAITH FORMATION IN ACTION



Nativity Scene 12-2019



Kindergarteners' version of building their own church



Faith Formation Bulletin Board

We **NEED** your help! Volunteer to be a catechist or gatekeeper today! Contact Roberta Quinn or Grace Fay for more information!

Have you been getting our emails? If not, visit olgchurchbl.org/email to update your email address! Thank you!

REMEMBERING NCYC 2019

By: Rhyan Lorenc

Hello, my name is Rhyan Lorenc and most of you probably know I went to the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis and today I am here to share my experience with you. The experience I had at NCYC has changed me, deepened my faith - from the many stories that I heard, especially the message from our pope. This was the first time that he has taken time out of his busy schedule to write and send a letter to NCYC. He explained that young people are the church and that we need to go forward to participate not just as an alter server but doing different activities within the church, to go deeper into your faith and most importantly become closer with the church. He also said to go and seek the people who are alone, who are suffering and don't follow Jesus. He told us to go change their lives.

Another example of a life changing story came from a woman from Rwanda. This brave woman showed great courage in sharing her story. She lived through the Rwandan genocide. She told us that she and seven others were hiding in a 5x7' bathroom. And just as a guard was about to find them and probably kill them, she said "God if you can hear show me a sign that you are real." And the guard walked away. This was a very powerful story for me. It showed that in a time of fear and hatred, she had to pray to God. The worst thing she said she had to do was to forgive the people who killed her whole family and most of the people in her tribe.

And as I strolled through the thematic park, where all the vendors and games were, I had time to enjoy myself viewing the vendors' wares, small saints on key chains, religious socks, etc. But I will remember mostly, the last evening of NCYC, the sea of white as all the priests and bishops walked through the tunnel. I reflected on what I had just experienced, the adoration when everyone poured down to kneel at the stage around the Blessed Sacrament. It struck me that God was truly there by our side, experiencing every moment with us.

The experiences I had at NCYC showed me that I can be more active within my church, to join the peer retreat team and show our little kids how they can play more of a role within the church. It was such an amazing experience that I hope to go back, to represent our church once again at NCYC. I hope this event can help me show other people the way, the truth and the life and to become a part of the church.



Parishioner Recognized

by Mary Salm

This past November, Guy Wheeler was recognized and honored at the Regional Food Bank Dinner and Gala for his long-time support of the Food Bank in its work to alleviate hunger and prevent food waste. Guy served on the Board of Directors of the Food Bank for many years, including five years as Board Chairman. He is credited with developing the idea of a fundraiser dinner and auction to benefit the organization's work. This involves soliciting local businesses to donate goods and services which are then auctioned off at the dinner. The first dinner, more than thirty years ago, drew 200 guests and raised \$9,500. Today, the dinner and auction has grown to over 600 guests with net revenue from the most recent event of \$220,000.

Congratulations and thank you to Guy for his many years of service and for planting the seed on a way to raise significant additional money each year for the work of the Regional Food Bank.



If you can possibly send your weekly contributions to the parish office, we will be most grateful. This can be even done electronically through your bank. During these very trying times, your offering is MOST APPRECIATED!

Nurse's Corner Nancy Michela, RN**Healthy Pets-Healthy People**

Before disaster strikes prepare yourself and your pets. The Center for Disease Center & Prevention (CDC) has developed a checklist for pets in case of emergency. Ask your veterinarian for assistance when putting together the preparedness kit for your furry friends.

Photocopy or scan the following **documents**: Rabies Certificate, Vaccinations, medical summary, Prescriptions for medications (as needed), Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FeLV/FIV) test results (most recent), Ownership registration, Pet description with photo of pet Microchip information (registration number/company name and number), Owner information (phone number/address/family/friends or relatives), Waterproof container/bag for documents and flash drive.

Water—Food—Medications

2-week supply of food for each pet (stored in waterproof container)

2-week supply of water for each pet

Non-spill food and water dishes

Manual can opener

Feeding instruction for each pet

2-week supply of medications (as needed)

1-month supply of flea/tick and heartworm prevention

Other Supplies

Leash, collar with ID tag and harness.

Litter, scoop and disposal cat box (cats)

Toys

Appropriate-sized pet kennel with clean bedding, blanket or towel

Pet first aid book and pet first aid kit (vet wrap, pads, etc.)

Cleaning supplies for accidents (paper towels, plastic bags, disinfectant)

Can you think of other necessities? Treats!

You and your furry friends can endure any disaster that occurs- together!

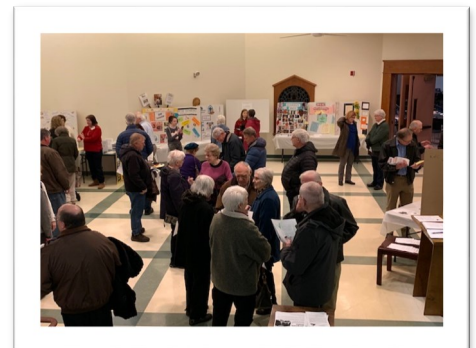
For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthpets/emergencies/pet-disaster-prep-kit.html>

Ministry Fair!

Pat Parker

Thank you for supporting our ministry fair. The displays were both welcoming and informational. We received 38 new volunteers over 2 weekends. A special thanks to Marty St. Amand and John and Joyce Martucci who did a fantastic job of cleaning up and putting the tables away.

After the Easter Season when we are in Ordinary Time we may have a few ministries set up in the gathering area on some weekends to interest more volunteers. Keep your eyes and hearts open to volunteering your unique gifts!



OLG Pastoral Council Update

By Paul Fanning

The OLG parish council met as planned in December, January and February. Looking back on 2019 in sum, many things were accomplished which advanced and improved our parish condition. These came about through great work by volunteers and parish staff who worked together on behalf of all. Here are just a few of these efforts.

The Finance Committee recommended, planned and completed the sale of the parish rectory the proceeds from which helped us build our reserve and resolve standing debts to the diocese.

OLG has seen the retirement of our former pastor, Fr. Peter Russo and has worked closely with the staff from St. Joseph’s Church for several months as we proceed through an interim period until a new pastor is identified for our parishes. We are grateful to Fr. Jack Varno for his ongoing support and service during this time. We welcome Fr. Martin Fisher who is now filling in for Fr. Jack who is on his annual vacation period.

Late last Summer, OLG launched its Reigniting Our Faith Campaign, and active appeal efforts ended before Advent. As of January 27, 93 commitment forms are in with a pledged amount of \$282,200 over the 5-year campaign period. The amount received in checks is \$37,385. This is a major accomplishment and one the entire parish can be proud of. With the campaign completed, a separate committee has now been formed to prioritize and begin facility projects and improvements that were presented during the appeal period. Review and preparation of identified projects is underway. More to follow on this.

Another committee has been formed to investigate and develop a strategy to reach out to former parishioners who are no longer participating at OLG. We have long known that declining mass attendance and reduced offertory collections means the parish has been operating at a loss. We need to reverse this with a deliberate outreach effort.

Two “Town Hall” meetings were held after Sunday masses in the New Year to gain parishioner input and develop a parish Path Forward. An outcome of the

first meeting was getting essential information to update the various parish ministries. This was needed for our Parish Profile. Trustees John Lorenc and Polly Van Nostrand led efforts to update the document which is being used by the diocese to help identify our future pastor. Council member Dave Cote completed a draft last month which has now been accepted by the diocese.

There are fresh efforts to re-energize socialization with periodic after-mass refreshments and improving and increasing communications within the OLG family. The latter is an ongoing effort, but our hope is to increase the number of volunteers for important projects as we seek to improve parishioners’ faith experience here. Lastly, the council has been joined in the New Year by several volunteers as we continue to deliberate and work together on OLG’s needs. These parishioners responded to personal invitations and are attending and participating as guests to help our parish forge ahead. They are reinforcing the team that has been in place for more than a year. Following guidance from the diocese, all are now being considered as members of OLG’s “interim committee” pending the identification and assignment of a new pastor.

NOTE: LOOK FOR THE SUGGESTION BOX NEAR THE NURSERY ROOM. WE INVITE YOUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS. THIS ISN’T TO SAY WE WILL BE ABLE TO FULFILL EVERY NEED, BUT WE WILL CERTAINLY LISTEN TO YOU AND TRY!
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Building & Grounds Committee:

Calling all handi-men and handi-women! OLG is looking to add to our Building & Grounds Committee. Do you have expertise in plumbing? Heating? Electrical? General Contracting? We could use your help! The first step will be to schedule a comprehensive walk-through of the church to determine any areas that need maintenance or upgrading. Then, the committee will organize this list by priority. Once we have our priorities organized, we will start looking for people, preferably within our parish, to help with these projects. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact David Cote at davidleocote@gmail.com or text/call 518-727-5148. Thank you!

Evangelization Is Key to OLG

The word ‘evangelize’ comes from the Church Latin ‘evangelizare’, “to spread or preach the Gospel”, with the Greek root euangelizesthai or “bring good news.”

The Catholic church in the United States has been greatly affected by recent abuse scandals within the church. All too often, we are shocked by the news of another scandal. While the importance of religion in people’s lives has been declining for decades, recent events have exacerbated this social decline.

Our Lady of Grace has seen roughly a 30% decrease in Mass attendance over the past three years. Likewise, our offertory collections have also decreased due to this lower attendance at Mass. Like any company or organization, lower income over time results in less services and forces us to do more with less, not just monetarily, but also with volunteerism. With fewer people involved at church, the fewer volunteers we have to offer services to others, as Christ calls us to do!

The key to reversing this trend is our constant and consistent effort to ‘bring the good news’ by ‘spreading the Gospel’ with our neighbors, friends and family. Now, I am not suggesting you go door-to-door asking people for donations and handing them pamphlets like some denominations are famous for. What is needed is a simpler, more personal, approach to bringing the lost sheep back into the flock.

How can you do this? Glad you asked! Here are a few suggestions that may work for you:

- If you are active on social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), post occasionally about what is going on in our parish. Do we have an upcoming speaker? Post about it! Do we have a special holiday celebration coming up? Post about it! Show your social media friends how engaged our parish is!
- Make sure to LIKE Our Lady of Grace’s Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Our-Lady-of-Grace-Church-Ballston-Lake-NY-152683414767419/>) and comment, like and share the posts. Make sure you are ‘Following’ as well so you are sure to see the posts. We have a Social Media committee that is actively engaged and post on a regular basis.

- You don’t have social media? That is fine! Give a friend, relative, neighbor a PERSONAL invitation to join you at Mass on Sunday. Explain it is a pressure-free parish and give personal examples of how OLG has helped you over the years.
- GET INVOLVED! Dedicate time to join one of our parish ministries. The more we are ALL engaged with the community, the more people we reach and the more we are recognized as a vibrant parish community.

These are just a handful of ideas. What is important is to keep it personal and show your enthusiasm. People want to be part of the greater good, and OLG is a great place to satisfy that calling.

If you would like to join the Evangelization Committee, or have ideas for the committee, please feel free to contact Mike Holley at mholl1299@gmail.com or David Cote at davidleocote@gmail.com.

Have a blessed and abundant Spring!

David Cote

Path Forward Meeting News

by Polly VanNostrand

Our second Path Forward townhall meeting was held on January 12, 2020 after 10:30 Mass. The meeting was preceded by a potluck lunch ! Twenty-seven people attended. The floor was open for public comment and discussion. Many ideas were discussed and I will capsulize them below. If you would like to help move any of these forward, please contact a member of the Council.

Concern with aging population: how do we build a stronger faith community: how to help people feel as though they have time to participate: fear of commitment and how to alleviate: we need a volunteer coordinator: can we develop a fundraising event that is ‘ours’ and invite the outside community to join us: do we have the funds to be more visible, improve social media, participate in Flag Day Parade, bistro tables for gathering area, hire more staff: can we meet with other parishes to exchange ideas/have joint programming: liturgy changes to include suggestions of returning to old easier version of Creed, projection screen for Mass, bring back the bread, improve communication with an announcement board in gathering area, greater use of email and social media.

As you can see, your ideas and improvements are truly limitless. I think every single parishioner wishes to energize and build our community; but truthfully, we cannot do it without your help. Please pray about this and ask God to guide you into a ministry that fits your personal needs as well as your desire to serve.



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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>