

St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

November 2025

Here we go again!

Have you noticed how many things seem to pick up speed now that the school year is back in motion? By the end of the month, we'll have Thanksgiving, the Feast of Christ the King, and the beginning of Advent. Four short weeks later will be Christmas. Before you know it, Lent and Easter will be here, then summer, then the beginning of the school year, and around we go again. The cycle of the liturgical year is mirrored in the cycles of family life: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations. All these significant days are given to us again and again. Have you ever wondered about this?

These annual events give us a chance to reflect and reevaluate. On your wedding anniversary, you probably reflect on your life with your spouse. There may be a lot of gratitude in this. There may be a desire to grow in your marriage or to do better in some way. You may discover that your marriage is a greater blessing than you ever anticipated, or that it has challenges that you never imagined.

Similarly, when Advent comes anew, it's a chance to remember how glad we are that God is with us. We may seek ways to be more present and responsive to Jesus. We may try to look for him in people who are poor, or uprooted from family and friends. We may learn to be more patient, since Jesus comes in

his own time, not ours.

Also, it must be admitted that the cycle of the year gives us a lot of opportunities for do-overs. Were there tensions in your family gathering last Thanksgiving? Here's an opportunity to mend fences and encourage openness among the people you love. Did last Advent leave you frazzled? Here's an opportunity to carve out some quiet time with Jesus.

When we come to these special days, every year they are a little different. The main reason is that we are different. Each year we bring to the celebrations another year's worth of experience, another year's worth of relationships, another year of family and friends growing closer and growing apart, another year of births and deaths. Every

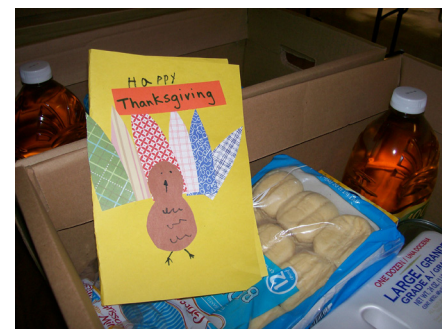
year our relationship with God is different. Perhaps we are more attentive to his work in our lives. Perhaps we are more open to others for love of him. Perhaps we are finding new ways to live out our faith.

These annual cycles are one of God's gifts to us. They give us the chance to ponder more deeply his goodness, to trust in his steady faithfulness to us, to notice how we have grown and changed in the past year, and to see if our lives are on a path that draws us closer to Him and closer to the people around us. So here we go again. And it's a blessing to be able to say that!



Thanksgiving basket tradition continues

For a number of years, St. Patrick's St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry has been distributing Thanksgiving baskets. The baskets contain the makings of a Thanksgiving feast, with some additional items for



subsequent meals. This is a big job and many volunteers are needed, especially on the morning of Saturday, November 22. This is a great opportunity for families to volunteer together—children are very welcome as long as they are accompanied by adults. There is a job for everyone! Look for details and volunteer sign-up information in the weekly bulletin.

SVDP needs your financial help more than ever to be able to prepare enough Thanksgiving baskets. With grocery prices rising, the cost of each basket is estimated to be about \$40 this year. As of this writing, the number of baskets has not been decided but most years the number distributed averages around 240.

Would you be able to help? Any amount is much appreciated! Donations can be made in several ways. Cash or checks made out to

see **Thanksgiving basket** on page 4

It's Black Catholic History Month

November is Black Catholic History Month. Black Catholic history in the United States goes back to the founding of the city of St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. For a timeline of Black Catholic History and a list of books and other resources, see uscbb.org/committees/african-american-affairs/black-catholic-history-month.



Have you heard of the “Saintly Six”? They are six African-American Catholics whose causes for sainthood are in progress: Venerable Mother Mary Lange, Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton, Venerable Henriette DeLille, Venerable Pierre Toussaint, Servant of God Julia Greeley, and Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman. (Recently another was added: Servant of God Friar Martin de Porres Maria Ward.) When canonized, these will be the first Black saints from North America. As we celebrate All Saints’ Day, consider learning more about these holy women and men as well as praying for their causes.

One of these future saints is from Illinois. Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton (1854-1896), who grew up in Quincy, was the first “openly Black” priest in the US. There had been several other Black priests but they had all passed as white. No American seminaries at that time would accept non-white men so Augustus had to go to Rome to study and be ordained. He was first assigned to his hometown of Quincy, but then sent to the south side of Chicago, where

he worked hard until his death to develop a parish and serve the poor.

Have you ever wished you could see and hear a saint speaking? Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman famously addressed the US Catholic Bishops in 1989, not long before her death from cancer. We are fortunate to be able to experience this future

saint’s joyful words and song on video. The link can be found at uscbb.org/committees/african-american-affairs/black-catholic-history-month (or search YouTube for Sr. Thea Bowman).

Speaking of singing,

did you know that one of our most beloved hymns that we sing at St. Patrick was written by a Black Catholic composer? James Edward Moore Jr. (1951-2022) was a composer, conductor, pianist, and master teacher who wrote “Taste and See” as well as a number of other hymns that have been sung, recorded, and included in hymnals here and around the world.

The history of Black Catholics has much to teach all Catholics about love, faith, and endurance. Even when their earthly Church betrayed them through complicity and even participation in slavery, bigotry, and injustice, many held fast to their faith in God, love of Jesus, and trust in the Holy Spirit. Take some time this month---and every month---to learn more!



Deadline for submission of articles and news items for the next issue of *In Focus* (December) is **Sunday, November 9.**

Take a look at our new playhouse!

A new playhouse provides an outdoor attraction for St. Patrick’s youngsters to use during Sunday Coffee Shop and other parish events. Along with the outdoor toys and the new picnic tables, our parish offers a safe place for kids to play and families to socialize. There are plans in the works to have a house blessing and to hang a small crucifix.

The playhouse came as a kit and is made of cedar. A generous group of men known as “The Handy Grandpas” (Jim Mayer, Bob Kimmey, and Jim Westervelt) assembled it. Craig Goad and Mick Harmon also did extensive work with the building and landscaping. We are grateful for everyone’s efforts!

The playhouse is designed for toddlers through early elementary years. It has a built-in sink and stovetop. There is a wide variety of play food to “cook” and serve. The outside has a bell, a mailbox, and working solar lights.



In October, there were fall flowers in the flower boxes and a miniature pumpkin patch at the side of the house. As Christmas approaches, we hope to have a small Christmas tree, nativity scene, and possibly some Christmas lights. The house came with a cover to protect it during the harsh winter months. Spring will likely bring Easter decorations and spring flowers.

Suggestions for a name for the playhouse, and ideas or donations for seasonal decorations are welcome!

What are you grateful for in this Thanksgiving season?

We asked some of our Communications Committee members for their thoughts on what they are grateful for this year.

I'm grateful for my children and that I am still able to drive to visit them in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota during the holidays. Then I'm grateful to return home for heartwarming Mass at St. Patrick. —*Judy Fierke*

I am thankful for so many things! For my family and all the good memories I have of life with them; for the many imaginative ways that people make life easier for me; for friends who make it possible for me to celebrate Mass several times a week; for all the comforts of living at The Windsor of Savoy, even for vaccinations; for friends whose reciprocated love warms and sustains me; for our priests, especially those who have helped me to grow; for the gift of Jesus in Holy Communion; for the Spirit that inspires even when not importuned; for Our Father, who finds so many ways to reveal how much he loves me. There's much, much more, of course.... —*Mary Lou Menches*

I thank God for the gift of Pope Leo and the gift of the conclave, this unique instrument which allows the Church to rise above the chaos, intrigue, and corruption which characterizes the election of leaders in our world today. This gift gives me one reason to sleep peacefully in an otherwise chaotic world where the truth is arbitrated by those with the most resources. —*Stephen Odara*

I continue to be grateful for my good health and being here for my son. After beating cancer three times, I awaken each day sobered to the fact that I am fortunate to be able to take my son to school every day, help him with homework each night, and make him a healthy dinner that fuels his body for sports and his mind for school. I am also grateful for my dog and three cats because they are an unending source of love. These are all simple things, but those tend to be what bring me the most joy in my everyday life, and for which I am most grateful at this time of year. —*Alia Rdissi*

I'm grateful for having a place in the world, for being around people with whom I share companionship, projects, and skills, for the great variety of personalities and relationships. I'm grateful that God has put me to give and receive love with him and with the people around me. —*Cathy Salika*

I am thankful for so many things: good health and being able to be active, food on the table, being able to swim in the mornings in the summer, but most especially, a strong community that has continued to challenge me and support me. —*Laura Wright*

I am thankful for: the multitude of blessings our family has received this past year, especially the birth of our youngest grandchild, Rory Alexander Yanchus (5/22/25); for the swelling resurgence of college students who are returning to and joining the Catholic Church as evidenced by our own St. John Newman Center at the University of Illinois; for the return of Fr. John Pham to our St. Patrick family; for the living proof of Christ's divine mystical body that we see at Sunday Mass through the dynamic diversity of our St. Patrick family.

—*Stan Yanchus*

This year, I am particularly grateful to be able to rekindle a family relationship I had neglected for far too long. I'm grateful for my family, and for the love and grace I have found among the members of this committee, as well as in our parish family and in the wider community. And I am so grateful to all the courageous people standing up against cruelty in these chaotic times.

—*Elizabeth Hendricks*

It's time for Ladies Knight Out

"Cath'lic Boys on Retreat" is the latest show for Ladies Knight Out on Saturday, November 8. Come for the always delectable buffet and stay for the show. St. Brigid Hall doors open at 5:00 p.m. and the show will start at 7:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$25 and are on sale during Coffee Shop or from the parish office.



The men have been rehearsing for months. Based on how funny they are in front of an audience of church ladies, one can only imagine the jokes and pranks that go on behind the scenes! The performers and musicians enjoy the reactions of the audience during the show and the parish fellowship before and after it. This one-of-a-kind ensemble has wowed the ladies for several years now. Come see what's in store for this year – you won't want to miss it!

Come and see "Life for Life, Maximilian Kolbe"

The Women of St. Patrick invite everyone to see the movie "Life for Life, Maximilian Kolbe" on Sunday, November 16, from 1 to 3 p.m. in St. Brigid Hall. Movie popcorn will be served.

Catholic Saint Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941) volunteered to die in place of a stranger in the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz. The movie follows the stranger who lives with the memory of Maximilian Kolbe's sacrifice.



Q: I've been away from the Church for a long time because I divorced and remarried, and then a

friend told me that I couldn't come to church anymore. Why is that?

A: Well, your friend misled you. You can always come to church, to Mass – and I hope you do, in fact! If your former spouse is still living, you can explore the possibility of filing for an annulment by speaking with our pastor, Fr. Anthony Co. Some situations are complicated to resolve, but others are relatively easy, and there is everything to be gained by simply inquiring.

Even when there is a marriage issue needing to be resolved, there is good reason to come to church, to Mass. While you may not receive the Eucharist, you can come forward in the Communion procession to be blessed, which in itself is a great thing! By your presence you join the praying community in praising and worshipping God and asking for God's help for others as well as for yourself. You develop relationships with others who come to pray, relationships that may become a comfort base for you. You can participate in one or more of the parish ministries, such as the parish's food pantry or Meals on Wheels, where you are in a position to help others – even as you yourself are helped by your participation.

So yes, do come to church!

Baptisms at St. Patrick's

We welcome the following recently baptized into our faith community:

David Mnyampara and Cemy

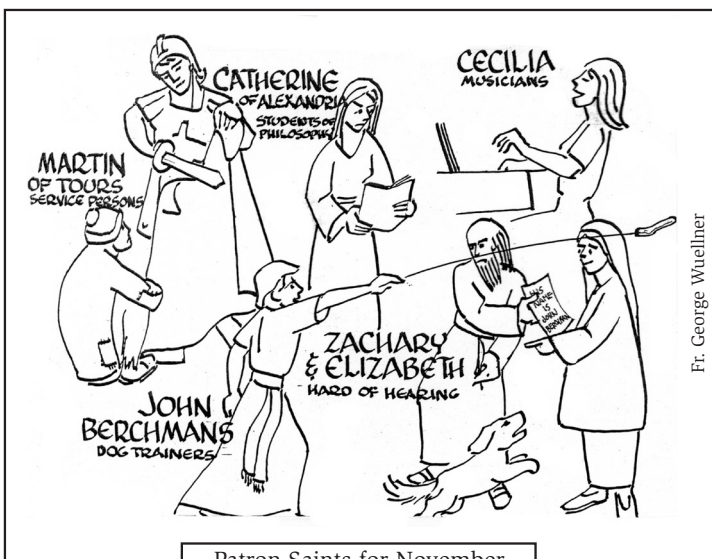
Mnyampara, baptized September 19, whose parents are Mamiley Masweka and Cesar Mnyampara.

Baptism is the sacrament by which we become adopted sons and daughters of God. Baptism preparation class is offered at St. Patrick's at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month, or by appointment. Parents, godparents, and all are welcome.



Vocation Prayer

Loving Father, we rely on you to inspire us, men and women everywhere and from all walks of life, to respond generously to your call to embrace the gift of vocation in our individual circumstances. Bless us all with the joy that comes through living service. We pray in union with the great communion of saints in the name of Jesus, your son.



Patron Saints for November

Thanksgiving basket from page 1

SVDP can be put into the designated Thanksgiving basket offertory envelope or into your own envelope, sealed and clearly labeled "Thanksgiving baskets," then placed in the collection basket at Mass or brought to the parish office.

You may also give online through the parish website.

- Go to www.stpaturbana.org
- Click on "Contribute"
- Click on "1) Contribute through Online Giving"
- Click on "View All Funds"
- Scroll down to "SVDP - Thanksgiving baskets"
- Make your donation
- (You can also donate to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry while you're there!)

Thank you to all who contribute their time, treasure, and/or prayers in this season of thanksgiving!

Help needed!

In Focus has been going strong for 43 years now, and we can do this because of the many people who pitch in. We have three special needs right now:

LAYOUT Two or three times a year, scheduled in advance, you'd receive files of edited text, photos, and graphics. You'd have three days to do the layout and create a pdf using whatever publishing software you're already familiar with.

WRITERS Every couple of months, you'd receive a topic, knowledgeable contact people, and Web resources. You'd have about 10 days to write 400-600 words on a topic.

PHOTO EDITOR Photos give vibrancy to *In Focus*, but it takes time to select them each month. You'd read the draft of *In Focus* and select photos to help tell the story of our parish life.

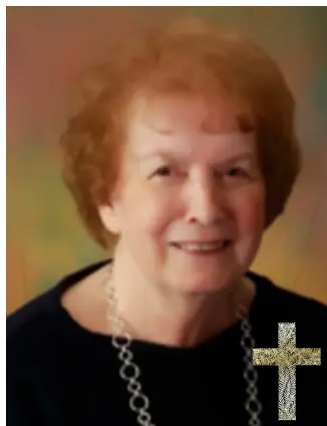
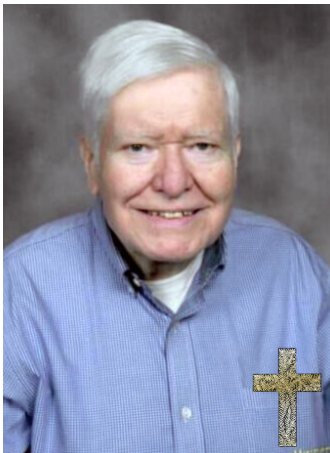
Can you help? Contact Cathy Salika at csalika@illinois.edu.



The Communion of Saints

The communion of saints is the Church. . . . Some of Jesus' disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating in full light God himself, triune and one, exactly as he is. All of us, however, in varying degrees and in different ways share the same love towards God and our neighbors, and we all sing the one hymn of glory to our God. All, indeed, who are of Christ and who have his Spirit form one Church and in Christ cleave together. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 946 and 954)

Let us pray for our fellow saints, as they pray for us!



St. Patrick's honor roll in Heaven

As of this writing, the following members of St. Patrick's faith community have entered eternal life this year, joining so many others who preceded them and now share in the love and glory of our Father. We pray for them and for their families – and for all of us, too, that we may one day gather with the community of all the faithful in peace and joy.

Patricia Minogue
Kevin Martindale
Loretta Chinski
Judy Hummel
Rebecca Bransley
Richard Kolaczowski
Helen Cler
Nancy Haessly

Robert Carty
Barbara Franklin
Dick Wyninger
Dorothy O'Connell
Barbara Cannon
Clare Barkley
Helen Handal
Jamie Calle

*May the angels lead you into Paradise,
 may the martyrs come to welcome you
 and take you to the holy city,
 the new and eternal Jerusalem.
 May you have eternal rest.*

—Commendation, Rite of Funerals

All Saints

All saints? How can it be?
 Can it be me,
 holy and good,
 walking with God?
 How can we say that we're all saints?
 O that we could!
 Some Saints touch the divine,
 and as they shine,
 candles at night,
 holy and bright,
 gladden the spirits of all saints,
 giving us light.
 All saints stumble and fall.
 God, loving all,
 knowing our shame,
 longs to reclaim:
 standing or falling we're all saints.
 Treasure the name!
 Come, saints, crowds who have gone
 beckon us on,
 hindrances shed,
 joy in our tread,
 one in the Spirit with all saints,
 looking ahead.

*— Brian Wren for the
 parish of All Saints,
 Hunters Hill,
 New South Wales, Australia*

All Souls' Day

On November 2 we observe the feast day of All Souls' Day, the third day of Allhallowtide, after All Hallows' Eve (October 31) and All Saints' Day (November 1).

All Souls' Day commemorates all the faithful departed whom we believe to be undergoing a purification in Purgatory because they died with the guilt of lesser sins on their souls. This purification is happening because, according to Revelation 21:27, "... nothing unclean shall enter [unto Heaven]."



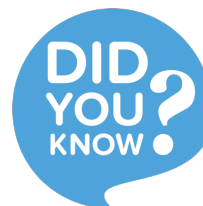
According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Purgatory is an intermediate state where souls "who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified... undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven." Upon departing from the body, these Holy Souls are not perfectly cleansed from their venial sins. We, the faithful on earth, can help them enter Heaven through prayer and remembrance.

In the 10th century, Abbot Odilo at the Cluny monastery in France established November 2 as a day to pray for the dead. The observance spread throughout the Christian world, and by the end of the 13th century, All Souls' Day was universally celebrated.

According to the sacred tradition of the Catholic Church, from Nov. 1 to Nov. 8, it is possible to gain plenary indulgence for the benefit of the souls of the departed who are in Purgatory. Indulgences are the full or partial remission of the temporal punishment of sin.

All Souls' Day should be spent, in part, in prayer for the souls of our loved ones, as well as those who have no one to pray for them. A plenary (full) indulgence for a Poor Soul can be obtained by visiting a graveyard on All Souls' Day. The Christian must have also received confession and Communion within twenty days before or after visiting the graveyard, in addition to praying for the intentions of the Pope and being in a state of complete detachment from all sin. A partial indulgence for the Holy Soul can be gained by praying an Act of Contrition, an Act of Faith or Hope, doing an act of charity, visiting a cemetery, time spent in Adoration, or even making the sign of the Cross. Often, when visiting a cemetery, some mark of esteem, such as flowers, are left at the grave site.

This year, All Souls' Day falls on a Sunday.



There are still vacancies on the Parish Council. Will you fill one of them? Contact President Kathryn Guy (wmelephant@gmail.com) with any questions.

News from the Respect Life Ministry

by Megan Logsdon

In October, I had the privilege and pleasure of attending my first Pro-Life Prayer Chain at Hessel Park in Champaign. It was a beautiful fall day, breezy and warm. In my head, I imagined a giant “Hands Around the World” circle around the park. In reality, there were maybe 20–30 people, coming and going as they were able. Being a lifelong advocate for life, I’m shocked this was my first time, but... not really. These things make me uncomfortable. Public displays. Attention on me. The possibility that I could be challenged or mocked. All uncomfortable.

But as I was preparing to write this, I realized that discomfort is what I needed. I kept hearing this:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will have their fill.

Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Justice comes easy for me. Peace is where I have struggled. I’ve been eager to change minds but I’m still learning how to do

it in a way that’s truly peaceful and loving. I had begun to feel the need to take a step back, further from that attention that I don’t want. What did that look like while still supporting pro-life efforts? After a years-long break prompted by futile anger from endless social media debates, I joined the Pro-Life Ministry and began to assist others in planning our annual prayer vigil. And now, several years after his request, I am responding to Fr. Anthony and beginning to write for In Focus in the name of the Respect Life Ministry. Our youngest child just graduated high school and while our schedule hasn’t eased, I feel ready to take this on. I hope by my writing this, I will encourage our parishioners to think daily about ways that they can advocate for the unborn.

Regarding the prayer chain, I took my husband for support, and we were welcomed immediately. As cars drove by, there were some unkind gestures, but lots of honking in support. This got me thinking, with so many of us believing in the sanctity of life, what might happen if we found more ways to come together to make a change?



Parish Council news

At their September meeting council members reviewed final plans for the Time and Talent campaign—already underway as we write. Have you selected a ministry you’d really like to undertake this year? You can never be too late to sign up for one of these ways to be Christ for others. And if the fit isn’t good, you can always step aside and try something else. Know that you will reap great rewards, whatever your choice.

The ad hoc anniversary committee, recently joined by Sr. Karen Carlson, has sent an invitation to Bishop Louis Tylka to St. Patrick’s 125th anniversary celebration on July 5, 2026. No reply as yet.

Council members had previously discussed how to establish better connections with parish ministries and considered inviting ministry representatives to Council meetings. Council members have decided to make a start by inviting ministry representatives who had responded to the survey that asked “If your parish group were given infinite time, talent, and treasure, how would you use them to serve people through the parish?”

Father Anthony reported that on September 11 he celebrated Mass at the Brookdale Assisted Living facility on Philo Road. Although it was sparsely attended, a second Mass was planned for October 9. It is hoped that Mass might be celebrated at Brookdale at least monthly, perhaps even semi-monthly.

Because the October meeting date, October 12, conflicted with the date of the International Festival, the meeting was moved to October 19. Regrettably, you won’t be able to read about it here until our December issue, which will be published in the parish bulletin the last weekend of November.

Don’t forget to select a ministry to try—it would be a wonderful Thanksgiving gift to the Lord for all the gifts you have received, and a marvelous gift to each person you serve!

Thank you, Collin!

Collin Reymann is a man who has worn many hats at St Patrick. For the last couple years, he has been assisting Fr Anthony and the office staff by running errands, keeping supplies stocked, and whatever else they needed. He took a leading role in the OCIA program, and many of us will remember him, dressed in a tux, serving wine at parish events with great panache. All this, as a part-time job, while he was also pursuing a master’s degree!

His degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Colorado Christian University is now complete and he has earned his license to work as a professional counselor. So he has now moved on to a full-time job at the St Matthew parish school, where he is working as the school counselor. We wish him many blessings in his new role!



Prayer for students receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time

Heavenly Father,

We lift up to You these precious children who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. Fill their hearts with Your peace and love as they take this important step in their journey of faith. Guide their minds and hearts as they examine their conscience. Grant them the courage to be honest and the humility to seek forgiveness. Strengthen them with the grace of this sacrament, that they may grow closer to You and strive to live a life of goodness and virtue. Bless their families and catechists who have supported and prepared them for this sacred moment. May they continue to nurture these young souls in faith, hope, and love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Mercy, pray for them.

St. John Vianney, patron saint of confessors, pray for them.

Guardian angels, guide and protect them. Amen



St. Patrick's Parish In Focus

is published on the last weekend of the month in Urbana, Illinois. News items and information may be submitted by the first weekend of the month for an upcoming issue. Materials must include the name and telephone number of the person submitting them.

Please send news items to info-cusstpts@gmail.com. You may also send them to any Communications Committee member (listed below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Shirley Splittstoesser

Two Chocolate Chip Cookies

3 T all-purpose flour
a pinch of salt
a pinch of baking soda
1 T butter, softened
2 T packed brown sugar
1 large egg yolk
1/8 t vanilla extract
2 T chocolate chips



Heat oven or toaster oven to 325 F. Line a small rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together flour, salt, and baking soda in a bowl, then set aside. In another bowl, cream butter and brown sugar together until well-mixed and light in color. Mix in egg yolk and vanilla extract. Stir in flour mixture until just combined, then stir in chocolate chips.

Divide dough in two and roll into balls. Set the balls on the prepared cookie sheet, about 2 inches apart. Bake for 8-10 minutes until the cookies' edges are set and browned but the centers are still soft and puffy. Let cool on sheet for about 10 minutes, then enjoy!

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Do you have a favorite quick and easy recipe to share? Maybe something your family and friends really enjoy? Please send it to Mary Lou Menches (mmenches@illinois.edu) — our readers are always looking for that great addition to a meal!