

ST. PATRICK'S PARISH

In Focus



Advent – A path to transformation

In the last few months, the word “change” has appeared more than a few times in the media, mostly in sound bytes from political speeches. For some people, “change” signals fear, caution, even trepidation. For others, “change” can evoke a sense of hope, wonder, and welcome possibilities.

Regardless of how you react to change, the message of Advent is that change is coming.

In the New Testament we read that the apostles thought their awaited savior would bring about political change—a new independent nation for God’s chosen people, free from foreign rule. But many early followers of Jesus missed the mark, and some were too disappointed to accept the



new possibilities that Jesus spoke to them—a message of love, not power.

In the Old Testament it wasn’t the politicians, but the prophets who called people to change. Many ignored their advice and warnings, but sometimes prophets were embraced by the people, who listened and believed once again in God’s covenant promise. They realized the need to change their ways back to God’s ways. Isaiah is the prophet in our Advent Sunday readings reminding us that we are traveling on a path and encouraging us to realize that “God is near.”

Where do you find yourself as Advent begins?

Advent, which marks the beginning of the Church year, is a time to focus on what really matters. Christians wait for the coming of Christ,

— See **Advent** on page 2

“Through this holy anointing...”

Any one of you who is ill should send for the elders of the church, and they must anoint the sick person with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him. The prayer of faith will save the sick person and the Lord will raise him up again.

—James 5:14-15

On Sunday, Dec. 7, the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick will be celebrated at noon Mass. This celebration of the sacrament offers an opportunity to anyone who wishes to be anointed to do so in the supportive presence of the worshipping community of St. Patrick’s. Participants may include

those suffering from a chronic illness, those whose age brings deteriorating health, fear, and loneliness, those who may be suffering emotionally or spiritually, and those facing hospitalization, surgery, or ongoing medical treatment of any kind.

Jesus knew that wellness is



holistic. We are made of body, mind, and spirit; if any part of this whole is unwell, our entire being suffers. When anyone among us is suffering, we are all affected. So we come together as a faith community to celebrate this sacrament because when one of us suffers, it diminishes us as a whole.

Often when asked to heal someone Jesus told them that their sins were forgiven. He knew that spiritual and emotional suffering is as real and can affect our health as much as true physical disease. The Sacrament of Anointing touches whatever part of us we

— See **Anointing** on page 7

For a more prayerful environment

The Ministry of Worship has considered ways to create a more prayerful atmosphere in the church during Advent. If you notice a few things that are being done differently, please allow them to help you enter into a more prayerful frame of mind. For example, the Worship team has provided a prayer by Henri Nouwen (printed on the back of the worship aid) that



may be prayed before the start of the liturgy. Also, the musicians will provide a prelude that, with dimmed lighting, will evoke a more reflective environment before Mass.

It is hoped that these and other small changes will enrich your Advent and aid in the preparation of your heart for the coming of the Christ Child.

Dia de los Muertos observed at St. Patrick's

The Mexican celebration of *Dia de los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead") can be traced back more than 2500 years to the rituals of ancient indigenous tribes of Mexico. The entire ninth month of the Aztec calendar was spent in festivities devoted to their ancestors and the goddess known as the "Lady of the Dead." With the arrival of Spanish missionaries and the spread of Catholicism in Mexico, the celebration was moved to coincide with the Church's observance of All Saints and All Souls days, Nov. 1 and 2.

Today *Dia de los Muertos* is celebrated by Mexicans with parades and picnics in the cemeteries where loved ones are buried. Families remember, tell stories, and construct *ofrendas*—altars that recall the life and times of the deceased. Mexicans believe that on *Dia de los Muertos*, the souls of the deceased return to visit their living families, so the idea of the *ofrenda* is to create spaces that would be wel-

coming and familiar to those who have died.

At St. Patrick's an *ofrenda* has been provided in the multipurpose room where parishioners commemorate their deceased loved ones by displaying their names or photographs. The display will remain there through the month of November, so it's not too late to add photos or names of deceased family members or friends, or to visit and pray there for them.



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but they also are called to place their trust in his transforming love for their own lives. We have an opportunity to reflect on the path we have chosen: Is our way God's way? Does our path lead us to personal holiness, to loving relationships with others, to a divine encounter with Christ in the Eucharist? Are we ready to welcome the little child who comes in peace and stillness and challenges us to be open to a transformation of love and saving grace?

An Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness yet seeking the light.

To you we say: "Come, Lord Jesus."

~Henri Nouwen



The deadline for submitting information, articles, and news items for the next issue of In Focus is December 7.

What I learned at the Spiritual Gifts workshop

By Shelly Benson

On Sunday, Nov. 4, I attended the workshop "Discover Your God-Given Strengths," presented by Lynn Grandon, Director of the Respect Life and Human Dignity office in the Diocese of Peoria. Lynn presented material based upon the best-selling book *Discover Your God-Given Gifts*, by Don and Katie Fortune.

According to the authors, "Scripture tells us that God has given each person a plan for their life and has given them certain motivational gifts to achieve their plan as told in Romans 12:6-8. No one has been left out, for God has a plan for each life and has equipped each person accordingly."

Lynn asked participants to take a shortened version of the



questionnaire that helps identify one's dominant motivational gift from the following: Perceiver, Server, Teacher, Exhorter, Giver, Administrator, and Compassion. The goal of

this questionnaire is for participants to become aware of their own gifts and how they can use their gifts to improve all aspects of their lives and to be able to contribute to their lives in a more intentional way.

At this seminar I discerned my dominant motivational gift as that of Server. As a Server, I learned, my main qualities are helpful, reliable, sensitive, and obedient. Some of the characteristics that describe a Server: one who meets practical needs, is detailed, likes immediate

goals, shows love through actions, needs to be appreciated, is a follower, a perfectionist, and supportive.

Ms. Grandon stated many churches are using these surveys as a basis for staff and church leaders to understand one another's gifts and how a parish may best use the gifts of their parishioners.

I thought the workshop was very helpful and hope to see the parish make use of it sometime in the future with staff, Parish Council members, and other ministry groups. It not only helps individuals gain in self-awareness, but also helps people working together to understand better other members of their group and how best they can use their God-given gifts to render their ministry more effective.

Former St. Patrick's cantor releases CD



Lord, show me the path
where I should walk,
Point out the right road
for me to follow,
Lead me by your truth
and teach me.
For you are the God
who saves me,
All day long I put my hope
in you.

Psalm 25

You may remember Laurie Spohn, a soprano who sang as a cantor at St. Patrick's while she was a student at the University of Illinois from 2000 to 2002. She has returned over the past several years to share her talents with us at Easter and

Christmas. After leaving the UI, she moved to Texas to continue graduate studies in voice at the University of North Texas.

Since graduating, Laurie has worked as a professional singer and voice teacher in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She also recently started a new position as Director of Music at St. John the Apostle Catholic Church in North Richland Hills, Texas.



In August, Laurie fulfilled a dream, recording a professional CD. The CD is titled *Through Him*; it contains 10 songs including "Ave Maria" and "He's Got the Whole World in His Hand."

Laurie says, "The CD is a way

to share my voice with those I have touched through singing. I hope it brings listeners great joy and meaning, through the many songs."

You can preview songs on Laurie's website, www.myspace.com/LaurieSpohn. If you would like a CD, please contact her at lauriesings1@yahoo.com, or 314/913-4672. The CD is only \$15 and she will gladly send one to you!

Think before you toss it St. Patrick's Seniors Group enjoyed fall cookout

St. Patrick's is going to step up its efforts to make recycling easy. For years now, the parish has had paper recycling receptacles in offices and near the copiers. There is a dumpster by the alley that is designated for cardboard. There is a receptacle for empty pop cans near the vending machine off the main hall. That was the beginning.

To make the pop can receptacle more visible, it will be moved into the main hall near the kitchen. Beside it will be a blue "tote" (a large wheeled container) that can be used for any kind of recyclables. All kinds of paper products can be placed there, including office paper, newspaper, gift wrap, and cardboard packaging, and all kinds of metals including cans, foil, and aerosol cans. The tote can also be used for plastics with recycling symbols 1 through 5, with one exception: plastic bags with a 4 cannot be recycled there (but many supermarkets will take those). Glass is not recycled at the parish, but your home recycling program may accept glass.

A little care is needed to make this work. Plastics and metals should be rinsed so that odors won't be a problem. They should also be reasonably dry because paper and cardboard cannot be recycled once they get wet. If you have a lot of cardboard, please take it out to the designated dumpster by the alley.

Note that styrofoam cups, soiled paper plates, and most plastic plates and dinnerware still cannot be recycled. Parish groups are encouraged to use the parish's plates, cups, and dinnerware and put them through the dishwasher. If you haven't used the dishwasher before, ask a staff member for help. For small groups, a supply of paper and plastic ware is available in the kitchen pantry.

Let's work together to care for God's good earth!

On Oct. 29, St. Patrick's Seniors Group gathered for their annual fall cookout, a tradition that started at the Conerty farm. At the parish center, Bill Plymire and Ray Wait grilled hamburgers and hot dogs on the parish's new gas grill.

Thirty-five seniors welcomed Bette D'Urso, Judy Long, Audrey Payne, and Mary Jo Thomsen to the group.

After Fr. Joe gave the blessing, all tucked into the potluck meal, enhanced by Halloween decorations provided by Ruth Plymire and Irma Wait. Alicia McKay and Tammi Nettles of Heartland Healthcare (formerly Manor Care) provided ice cream and toppings.

(Heartland now cares primarily for rehabilitation patients, and can accommodate 78 people on Medicare.)

The cleanup crew included Ruth and Bill Plymire, Betty Blanco, Bob Haessly, Ray Wait, and Leo Wood. After the meal, Bingo proved to be a popular entertainment, with all players taking home at least one white elephant prize.

The Seniors Group will meet next for their Christmas party, on Dec. 11. Each member will bring a nonperishable food item for the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry, and Sr. Charlene will give a Powerpoint presentation on her sabbatical trip to England and Scotland.



First-timer Audrey Payne holds her prize for winning at Bingo.



Judy Long hit it big at Bingo, winning twice at her first Seniors social event. "I finally admitted that I was old enough to join the Seniors!"



New members Mary Jo Thomsen (left) and Bette D'Urso listen carefully as Bingo numbers are called.

Volunteer Opportunities Rooted in Faith Campaign benefits Parish

The **St. Vincent de Paul Society** needs help filling food bags for the next day's applicants. (The number of bags of food given out on any given day continues to climb; the last-heard record was 54 bags of food given to the needy on a single day.) Volunteers are especially welcome on Mondays and Wednesdays, and can come even after work at, say, 5:00 p.m. to work for an hour or so. *Ellen Abell, 367-5648*

Good Samaritans are needed to provide day-time transportation for parishioners to keep appointments with a doctor or for treatments. And Sunday drivers who can swing by to pick up a neighbor on the way to Mass are a special gift to parishioners who would otherwise be unable to join our faith community for worship. Are you willing to be placed on an on-call list for one or both of these opportunities for service? *Carla Simmering, 328-4841*

Can you be available on a fairly regular basis to set out the bread and wine for Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning? For 5:00 p.m., 7:30 a.m., and noon Masses somewhat more is required, and it is for these Masses that help is needed. If you regularly go to Mass at one of these times, you'd need to arrive 20-30 minutes beforehand to have all in readiness—and still have some quiet time before Mass begins. Even serving as a substitute occasionally would help. *Mary Lou Menches, 344-1125*



Parish groups can submit entries for this column to the Communications Committee or by contacting Mary Lou Menches (344-1125 or mmenches@uiuc.edu). Provide your name and telephone number or e-mail address, and the name of your group.

In this time of economic uncertainty, St. Patrick's can rejoice in some good news: Parishioners' pledges to the diocesan Rooted in Faith campaign, \$586,941, have brought back to the parish \$116,487 (20%) in rebates. When our parish's goal of \$626,875 is reached, we will receive an additional \$8887 in rebates, plus 80% of any donations in excess of our goal.

In addition to the rebates, St. Patrick's has received \$2440 in the form of grants in support of special projects.

The grants come from interest on diocesan investment of pledge donations in an endowment named for Bishop Fulton Sheen. Its purpose is to aid parishes with religious education and faith formation. A member of the committee administering funds from this endowment, Fr. Joe Hogan encouraged St. Patrick's staff to apply for grants, and apply they did!

Mary Long, Carolyn McElrath, and Peggy Loftus completed on-line applications specifying how a program would meet diocesan priorities of need, community building, growth in faith, spiritual enrichment, ecumenical outreach, and ease of adapting for other parishes. Follow-up reports must also be filed, indicating how the money was used, and unspent funds returned.

To date, their applications have brought in \$2440,

which was used for the following programs in the St. Patrick's Presents... series:

- Sept. 2007: Marriage Enrichment Seminar, with Jim Healy
- Nov. 2007: Lady Bugs Live concert
- Jan. 2008: "Spice Up Your Spirituality," with Fr. Pat McGrath
- Apr. 2008: "You, CREW, BBQ, and Space Painter II"

Careful use of the grant money also helped provide a canopy for St. Patrick's booth at Market at the Square and assisted with costs for the Reconciliation celebration for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Great Adventure Bible Study, JustFaith, the Confirmation retreat, and the participation of three members of the parish staff in the diocesan Summer Institute. Another application of the grant money was in support of parishioner Minette Sternke's outreach in deaf ministry, not only locally but throughout the diocese.

Contributions to the Rooted in Faith campaign can still be made, and some pledged donations have yet to be filled. So it's entirely possible that St. Patrick's may enjoy yet another rebate check by the close of the campaign in July 2009. Our parishioners' generosity has blessed us with renewed trust

in God's providence, enjoyed in so many ways in the life of our parish.



Fr. Joe Hogan presents Minette Sternke with a certificate upon her completion of a four-year program in deaf ministry.

Let's hear it for parish life

If you are not a child and still get a stomach-ache on Sunday mornings when you think about going to church, or if you have thought how nice it would be to spend that hour at Starbucks reading the newspaper, this is for you.



Parishes are important. The parish is the place where Church happens, not as an abstract ideal or as an administrative structure, but as an expression of real human lives, a rich but frustrating work in progress, diverse lives united by common hungers and hopes.

Faith communities nourish parish life. They arise out of felt need, especially among parents determined to pass their faith along to their children. They share a history

with the house churches that nourished early Christians. A kind of intuitive grasp by the laity about what works and doesn't work continues to shape parish life.

Baptized people are meant to be in community. It is a loss to all of us when some feel so

discouraged that they leave their local church. We know those who, for varying reasons, have needed to "go away for a while" or who have found safe haven and nourishment in other communions.

Yet, like the anonymous Christian, the anonymous Church exists everywhere. People get together over coffee to talk about life. They tell stories, rediscover the Scriptures, break bread, drink to making a difference in the world. And like

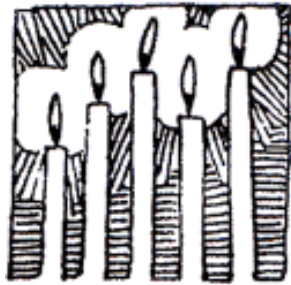
the formal Church they have left, they become two or three gathered together, disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Parishes need such pilgrims. The most important evangelization effort in the Church is to welcome home her own. Self-exiled Catholics of all stripes ought to belong to a parish—it is a good way to stay in the game, at the family table where all the discussions about the future, good and bad, are taking place. This will be possible if we accept the imperfect, painful process of being human together.

The essential work of the Church is reconciliation in the world, and this reconciliation starts with us, at the altar, where forgiveness is the miracle we witness in the death of the Lord. Parishes are centers where this grace waits to become flesh in us.

A Filipino Christmas is shared with St. Patrick's

Simbang Gabi, a Filipino Christmas tradition, is a novena of Masses celebrated in preparation for the birth of Christ. *Simbang Gabi*, literally "going to Mass in the evening," is also known as *Misa de Agrinaldo*, or "Mass at dawn."



This tradition began during the early years of Christianity in the Philippines some 400 years ago and is still widely practiced throughout the country. Filipino immigrants to the United States continue to uphold this tradition as well.

Originally, the *simbang gabi* was held about 4:00 a.m. to accommodate farmers who then had to go to the fields. In recent years, *simbang gabi* Masses in the Philippines have been celebrated both in the morning and in the

evening to accommodate the volume of churchgoers and city dwellers. Filipino immigrants have celebrated Masses in the evening because most Catholic churches are still closed at dawn.

This Advent season, the Filipino community of East Central Illinois in Champaign-Urbana and Danville will celebrate Masses at St. John Newman chapel at 7:00 p.m., starting Dec. 15 and ending Dec. 23.

At 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17, the *simbang gabi* Mass will be celebrated at St. Patrick's in the multipurpose room. The Filipino community invites all St. Patrick's parishioners to join with them in this celebration and to enjoy the traditional foods they have prepared.

**Mary, the Mother of God;
Mary, the unwed Mother;
the political refugee;
Mary, the homeless one,
the disciple and prophet;
Mary, the Third World
woman,
Mary, the one full of grace.**

~Pax Christi



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perceive to be in need of healing. Anointing both forehead and hands, the priest prays: *“Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.”* And: *“May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.”*

In his article in *The American Catholic*, Fr. Thomas Richstätter, O.F.M., reminds us: “In the sacrament we pray that the sick be healed in body, in soul and in spirit. God alone knows what kind of healing the sick need most: that a wound be healed; that a fear be turned to confidence; that loneliness be embraced by the support of a praying community; that confusion in the face of all the whys—why me, why suffering, why now—turn to insight. . . . The Sacrament of Anointing does not remove the mystery of human suffering. Yet its celebration gives us a window into the mystery of a loving God.” (The entire article can be read at www.americancatholic.org.)

This opportunity for celebration of the Anointing of the Sick is being offered during a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass to enable anyone in need of its healing power to attend. It also offers to the whole worshipping community a powerful witness of the power of this sacrament.

Rides will be provided for those in need. Please call the parish office (367-2665) by Dec. 3 if you or someone you know needs a ride so that arrangements can be made. For more information please contact Amy Jobin (367-2665) at the parish center.

Advent retreat: Creating a sacred space within

Amy Jobin will offer a half-day Advent retreat on Saturday, Dec. 13, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and concluding by 1:00 p.m. The retreat will be on the theme of “Creating a Sacred Space Within,” in the spirit of creating a sacred space for this time when we prepare once again to welcome Jesus



into our lives and into our world. There will be time for shared and individual prayer, quiet reflection, and the chance to “creatively prepare” our space within.

Consider giving yourself the gift of quiet space and time in the midst of this very full season of the year.



Academic Letter Awards The Academic Letter Awards ceremony was hosted by the St. Thomas More administration and the National Honor Society on Oct. 22. Academic Letters are presented to upper-class students who maintain a cumulative GPA from 3 to 3.5, depending on years in school. Recipients included 13 St. Patrick’s parishioners: Mary Cimasky, Timothy Columbo, Claire Drone-Silvers, Tyler Faught, Gracie Mayer, Johanna McCarthy, Kaleigh Niccum, John Patterson, Shelby Simmering, Ian Tate, Laura Welle, Dana Williams, and Andrew Wszalek.

Madrigal Dinner The High School of St. Thomas More will host their first annual Madrigals Dinner on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5 and 6. This evening of entertainment has a medieval flair. Travel back in time 500 years to enjoy food and frivolity with kings and queens, lords and ladies. St. Patrick’s parishioners performing include Gracie Mayer, Shelby Simmering, Claire Drone-Silvers, and Laura Welle. Contact the High School of St. Thomas More for tickets.

Sports Page St. Thomas More’s organized sports programs allow students many opportunities to develop their athletic abilities while

learning about teamwork and the competitive spirit. As ambassadors of STM to other schools and the community, all student athletes are responsible for upholding a high standard of Christian conduct and sportsmanship in all activities, both during school and after. Their motto is one of respect for one another, the opponent, officials, and oneself.

Fall sports at St. Thomas More include cross country, golf, volleyball, soccer, football, and cheerleading. There is also an enthusiastic pep band, which plays at football and basketball games throughout the year. The sports season has been exciting with the football team advancing to the playoffs, and cross-country competing in post-season races. Congratulations to the girls golf team, which competed in the State Golf Tournament. Finally, the boys golf team brought home the State Title Trophy. Many St. Patrick’s students participate in these events; please join in cheering on the Saber teams—schedules are available on the high school’s website: www.hs-stm.org.

Coming Attractions

- + Music Department Christmas Concert, Dec. 12
- + Christmas Break Begins, Dec. 20
- + Battle of the Bands, Jan. 26

Fr. Stan, “the man who is not lazy”

When Fr. Stanislaus Mutajwaha preached his first homily at St. Patrick’s, he told us two things about his name. First, he told us that we should call him Fr. Stan, and second, he told us that his surname, Mutajwaha, means “man who is not lazy” in his native language, Swahili. One only has to spend a few minutes with Fr. Stan to see that he is aptly named!

Fr. Stan was born in the village of Itahwa, Tanzania, the fourth of 8 children. This village is still the family home, and his mother, Justina Mukahigi, lives there with attentive children and grandchildren who take care of her and keep her company. Father attended primary school in Itahwa, about two miles from his home; for middle school, he traveled six miles to the village of Kiteyagwa. He walked to and from school each day and rather than complaining he says that “it was fun”!

Until the second year of middle school Fr. Stan aspired to be a medical doctor so that he could help fight against disease. Then the thought entered his head to become a priest and, once there, “it stuck very firm.” He spent one year in a preparatory seminary at the middle school level and then moved on to minor seminary (high school) in Rubya. He studied philosophy at the Mtungamo Major Seminary and theology at Kipalapala Seminary, both of which are in Tanzania.

Ordained in 1977 for the Diocese of Bukoba in Tanzania, Fr. Stan spent the first several years of his priesthood teaching. He taught science and math in a minor seminary and then went on to teach in the area of philosophy



in the major seminary. From 1988 until 1992 he studied in Rome, where he earned a doctorate in philosophy.

During his time in Rome, Fr. Stan was able to travel to Assisi, to spend time in Germany, and to visit Lourdes, which he feels is the most spiritual of all the shrines he has visited. During the course of his travels and study he became fluent in Italian and German along with

English and Swahili.

In 1985 Fr. Stan read an article in *National Geographic* magazine about the Shroud of Turin. His interest was piqued by the article and he began to read and study about the Shroud. He made the acquaintance of Fr. Peter Rinaldi, a Salesian priest who had been born in Turin and was an expert on bringing together the scientific and religious communities studying the Shroud. He visited Fr. Rinaldi in New York, and Fr. Rinaldi was instrumental in helping him with his research. Since there was no written material about the shroud in Tanzania, Fr. Stan wrote and published two books on the subject in his native language. Fr. Rinaldi supplied some photos for the book shortly before his death. Fr. Stan was able to view the Shroud in Turin during the Jubilee Year when it was on display, and describes the experience as simply “so moving.” If you have an interest in the Shroud, he will be happy to share what he knows about it with you.

In August of 2004 Fr. Stan came to the United States for a sabbatical from his many years of teaching. It is here that he has had his first experience of pastoral work, which he has taken to with such grace and ease. He is also working at the direction of Bishop Nestor Timanywa of the Bukoba Diocese to raise funds for the building of the Kwauso Secondary School. This will be a co-educational boarding school for about 400 students. The purpose of the school is to give the students a quality education based on gospel values, to produce responsible citizens for Tanzania who will be rooted and



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centered in Christ. Even the campus of several buildings will reflect this goal, having the chapel as the central building of the compound.

The estimated cost for the entire project is \$1,110,000 of which Father has helped to raise \$205,000 to date. He is especially proud of the first \$100 raised, which came from the Pre-K students at St. Vincent de Paul parish in Peoria. Because of this simple gift, the altar for the chapel will be designed with a foundation of two pillars. One pillar will be dedicated to the children of the United States, particularly those little ones from St. Vincent parish, and the other will be dedicated to the children of Tanzania.

You can learn more about Kwauso School and see photos of the buildings as they progress at the blog www.kwausoschool.blogspot.com. There is also a Powerpoint presentation available that explains the project in detail. As St. Patrick's parishioners begin to think about our own building needs, it is good to know that projects such as this, with God's grace, go on all around us. When we do God's work, we always find a way.

Although Fr. Stan is with us only for a short time, St. Patrick's is indeed blessed to have the services of this "man who is not lazy." We are grateful for his welcoming and ever-present smile and his many spiritual gifts to guide us on our journey in building the Kingdom.



Be crazy with CREW!

Are you already stressed out by the hectic pace of preparing for Christmas? Then take a break on Saturday, Dec. 6: "Be Crazy with CREW" and enjoy the fun of an evening of "Family Lunacy," featuring Sally Edwards a Chicago-based comedian noted for her stand-up comedy routines and rap styling. She has appeared on the Comedy Club Network, "Comedy on the Road," and NBC's "Friday Nights," where she has delighted audiences with her light-hearted take on marriage, work, and family.

In collaboration with St. Patrick's Presents, the evening is a fund-raising event for CREW's 2009 summer mission trip to



Memphis. A pasta dinner served by CREW members at 6 p.m. will precede the performance. Tickets are available at the parish office: \$5 for adults, \$3 for children under 12, and \$20 for families.

St. Patrick's Young Adults, new again

St. Patrick's Young Adults, previously known as Catholic Young Adults, was reorganized in late August by Pastoral Associate Amy Jobin. About 25 young adults, aged 20-40, gathered in September to start planning the structure of the group and their future activities. The Young Adults decided to form three base communities: single adults, married adults with children, and married adults who have no children at this time. They also decided to meet regularly for dinner and faith sharing in one another's homes. The single adults meet every two weeks on a Sunday evening. Both groups of married young adults meet once a month.

The goals of St. Patrick's Young Adults are to find ways to get to know one another and to connect with one another in prayer. They are also looking at joint volunteer activities in order to answer Christ's call to service together. All parishioners aged 20-40 are welcome to join by coming to one of the meetings announced in the bulletin or by calling Amy Jobin (367-2665).



When was your last great date?

“Great Dates,” a marriage enrichment program now referred to as (what else?) “More Great Dates,” took off for a second year in November. Participating couples focused on the theme “Enhance Your Love Maps,” the first of seven outlined in the book *The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work*, by John M. Gottman, Ph.D.

The next Great Date will be Dec. 13. The program will continue on a Saturday evening each month through May. Couples will gather at St. Patrick’s church for a short presentation on one of the six other principles and then leave for the place each couple has chosen for their Great Date.

Dr. Gottman’s book provides some down-to-earth exercises to help couples put the seven principles into practice. The principle of “Enhance Your Love Maps” relates to couples really knowing and understanding what is important to their spouses and what experiences each of them have had. Mark Freedman, who participated in the program with his wife, Laurie Kaufmann, recalled that as they tried the exercises they found themselves talking about childhood memories.

Mark observed that the Great Dates has an effect on two levels—one being to improve couples’ daily interactions and the other helping to deepen the relationship, to make the marriage flourish. Both Mark and Laurie work outside the home, and they have children aged 8 and 6; hence the time they have to focus on each other is very limited.

Among the 65 or so couples participating were Nick and Mary Kate Arends, parents of four, all under the age of 11 and including 8-year-old twins. Since the grandparents live far away, Mary Kate and Nick haven’t had much time just for the two of them. That’s one reason they really enjoy this program, since child care is provided by

CREW members for couples with small children.

“The children like their own activities too. They even like to see us reading the book. We do a lot with the kids, but this program has helped us get closer to each other. It has enhanced our marriage,” Mary Kate said.

The experience is not limited to parents of young children. Pat and Dick Justice, who parent a teenager, also find it difficult to set aside time just for the two of them. Pat said, “Great Dates is a good way to step back and look at our relationship. It is also helpful to hear about other couples and to meet new people, to develop a sense of community.”

The couples use their dates in a variety of ways. Pat and Dick have tried some new restaurants and found it enjoyable to have a relaxed conversation. Mark and Laurie like to take walks. Nick and Mary Kate observed their seventeenth anniversary by walking around some of the places on the U I campus that were reminiscent of their courtship when they were graduate students. (Another time they went home and

played cribbage.)

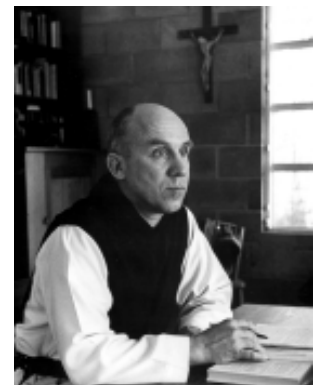
The couples agree that a good marriage is something that requires nurturing. Although they don’t feel a threat to their marriage, they want to hold onto what they’ve got. The exercises in the book show ways that married people can enhance their relationship. As Mary Kate observed, “This is a great thing for the church to do, to give us a good chance to have time together.”

All the couples expressed their gratitude for the program, which was initiated by Pat and Jim Mayer. To participate there is a one-time \$15 fee to cover the cost of the book. Donations for child care are welcome and are put toward CREW’s summer mission trip. For more information about Great Dates, call the Mayers (384-4860).



PBS to air Merton documentary

On Tuesday, Dec. 16, PBS will air a documentary on Thomas Merton’s spiritual journey. WILL has scheduled the showing for 9:00 p.m. The documentary, *Soul Searching: The Journey of Thomas Merton*, is also available on CD and has a companion book of the same title.



“Honoring our past, building our future”

November was an extremely busy month for St. Patrick’s as, collectively, the parish spent many hours learning about, discussing, and providing feedback on the proposed facilities master plan.

Between Nov. 2 and Nov. 19, twenty-six informational meetings were held in parishioners’ homes and at the parish center. Each meeting included a presentation by a member of the Second Century Advisory Committee (SCAC) as well as a display of the proposed master plan renderings and drawings. Feedback from participants was recorded by an SCAC member at each meeting.

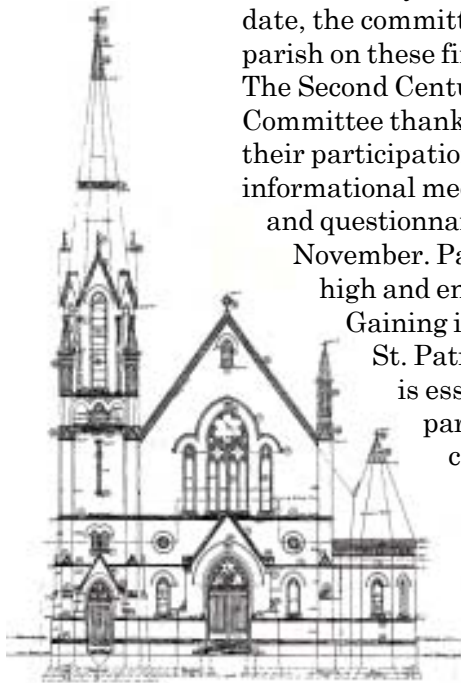
Following attendance at an informational meeting, participants were then invited to provide further feedback, through a confidential interview or a

confidential questionnaire. George Joseph and Erika Mildred of Joseph Consulting conducted the interviews and oversaw the questionnaire process. Information from the interviews and the questionnaires will be reviewed *solely* by Joseph Consulting representatives to help evaluate the general feasibility of the master plan.

In December, Joseph Consulting will report to SCAC the results of the feasibility study. At a later date, the committee will update the parish on these findings. The Second Century Advisory Committee thanks parishioners for their participation in the informational meetings, interviews, and questionnaires during

November. Participation was high and engagement robust.

Gaining input from many St. Patrick’s parishioners is essential as our parish community considers the proposed master plan for parish facilities and determines future steps.



THANKS!

Thanks to all of you who have helped in any way in the preparation of *In Focus*, our parish newsletter, in the past year. We certainly couldn’t do it without you!

Thanks to the many, many parishioners who have researched and written material for the newsletter, taken or shared photographs to lend interest, provided artwork, edited the thousands of words in an issue, laid out the pages with an eye to attractiveness and readability, offered suggestions for improvement or for topics to be pursued, reviewed or proofread drafts, patiently answered our questions—and so very much more.

Borrowing from Isaiah, we declare that “you are precious in our eyes”! God’s blessings on you, one and all.



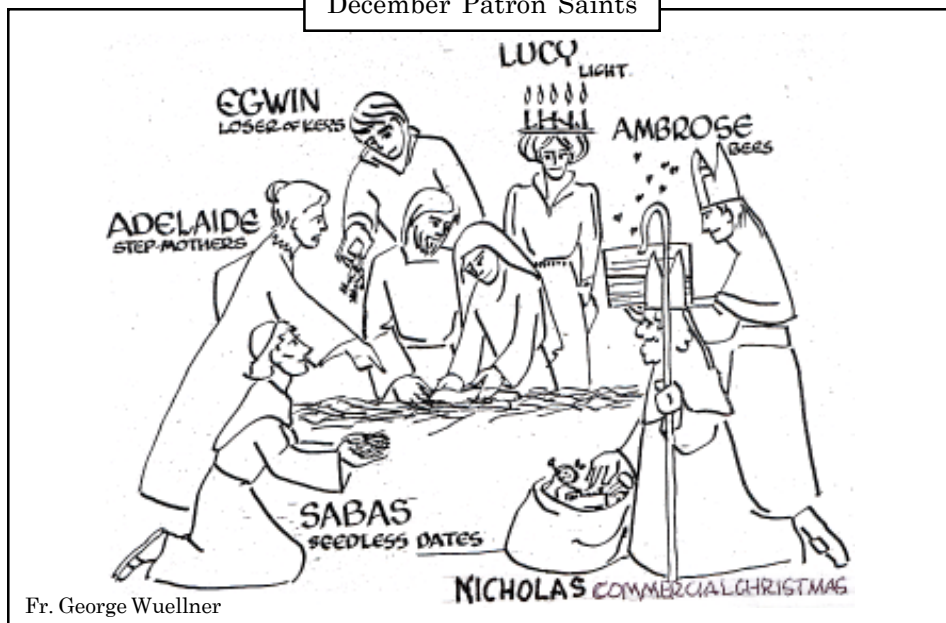
Welcome to new parishioners Sean and Tomi Blanchard, Craig and Lisa Gundersen, and Lucy Synk.

Welcome to the following, baptized into our faith community: Melanie Richardson, Cara Ficek, and Henry Ramey.

Please pray for deceased parishioners Mary Corcoran and Jeffrey Marshall.

Also remember in your prayers the many seriously and chronically ill members of our parish.

December Patron Saints



Fr. George Wuellner



Q: What are some good ways to prepare for Mass?

A: When we think about preparing for Mass, we usually think of the ministers' preparation—the choirs, the homilist, the lectors, and so on. But the liturgy is really the work of the whole assembly, each and every one of us who gather to pray together, to worship and praise God together.

Someone once said that preparation begins at home—bathing and donning clean garments for the occasion.

If time and circumstances permit, previewing the Scripture readings for the Mass before you leave home is a good way to prepare for Mass.

It has also been said that preparation begins (or continues) in the parking lot, as you exchange a smile or a greeting with others headed for the church and with those standing at the church entrance to welcome you.

Signing oneself with holy water on entering the church can be a powerful preparation as a reminder of your baptism into Christ's body, which you share with all other baptized Christians, especially those of your faith community who will join in the celebration of Mass that day.

Mindful of others already present in the church who are praying quietly, try not to disturb them as you find your place. But be ready to exchange a smile or nod of the head and perhaps a quiet word or two of greeting when the situation warrants.

Kneel in prayer for a few moments in acknowledgment of the Lord's presence and to reflect on the act of worship you are about to participate in with the rest of the faith community present.

After greeting the Lord, you might prayerfully review the Scriptures in the *Worship* hymnal, use the prayers in the back of that hymnal to raise your mind and heart to God, pray with the words of your favorite hymns in *Worship* or *Gather*, pray in your own words to the God who loves you more than you can imagine, or simply rest quietly in the presence of God within you and in the gathering of the faithful.

Elsewhere in this issue, an article describes steps taken to provide a prayerful atmosphere for parishioners gathering for Mass. One of these is the inclusion of an Advent prayer in the worship aid (in the front of *Worship*).

Whatever method or methods you use will provide some benefit, so try one or more of the above—or another of your own devising!

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Questions about Catholic practice or Catholic teaching may be sent to the Communications Committee in care of the parish office.

From the Parish Nurses


On October 26 the parish nurses presented winter health and safety information. During the Health Fair the nurses from Carle gave 60 flu shots, 13 pints of blood were donated, and 27 parishioners had their blood pressure taken. Thanks to all who took the time to complete the Parish Nurse Survey; it will help in planning future events.

Blood pressure screening will be offered again on Dec. 7 in the lounge. Vials of Life and pillboxes will be available then as well. The next Parish Nurses event will take place Jan. 25. God bless!

Ten Warning Signs of Health

1. Desire to care for and about others
2. Increased desire for physical activity
3. Willingness to share and communicate ideas and feelings
4. Ongoing presence of supportive friends and family
5. A generally positive, hopeful outlook
6. Daily life anchored in Christ's forgiveness
7. Ability to laugh at oneself and with others
8. Ongoing renewal in the Lord that affects all of life
9. Sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others
10. Ability to take care of self without a sense of guilt




in our parish library

This column features books for Advent, as well as books on the Gospel of Mark for the beginning of the new liturgical year, which begins with Advent.

Children's Books

The children's section of the library has numerous books related to Advent and Christmas, including many illustrated story books. Some examples include:

- *The Christmas Book*, by Moira Eastman and Wendy Poussard, includes the history, Christmas stories, songs, and crafts. Call Number: C 232.9 EAS
- *Christmas Customs around the World*, by Herbert H. Wernecke. Call Number: C 783 WER.
- *Christmas Songs and Prayers for Children*, illustrated by R. Bishop. Call Number: C 783 CHR.

Regular Collection

- *Biblical Meditations for Advent and the Christmas Season*, by Carroll Stuhlmuller, C.P. Call Number: 263.1 STU.
- *A Child in Winter: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany with Caryl Houselander*, edited with Scripture sections and comments by Thomas Hoffmann. Call Number: 263 HOF 2000.

- *Let It Be: Advent and Christmas Meditations for Women*, by Therese, Johnson Borchard. Call Number: 263.1 BOR.

- *Starlight: Beholding the Christmas Miracle All Year*, by John Shea. Call Number: 263.1 SHE

- *Stations of the Nativity: Meditations on the Incarnations of Christ*, by Raymond Chapman. Call Number: 263.1 CHA.

The Gospel of Mark

- *Mark: Good News for Hard Times*, by Montague. Call Number: 226 MON.

- *New Testament for Spiritual Reading*. Volumes 1 & 2 focus on Mark. Edited by John L. McKenzie, with commentaries and interpretations by Rudolf Schnackenburg. Call Number: 225.7 MCK.

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If you would like to donate books on the parish library's wish list, please contact Lori Mestre (365-9994), library team coordinator. If you need help locating materials in the library, Lori or one of the other team members will be happy to help. The parish library is open weekdays during office hours and on the fourth and fifth Sundays of the month from 8:30 to 10:45 a.m.



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 mid-month for the next issue. Written materials must include the name and telephone number of the writer.

Please send news items to a Communications Committee member, leave them in the committee's mailbox in the parish center, or call a committee member. All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. By-lines are generally omitted.

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Articles and information for this issue were provided by Shelly Benson, Carol Bosley, Mary Lee Brady, Pat Fettig, Katie Hinrichs, Judy Huelsbusch, Amy Jobin, Mary Karten, Roxane Lowry, Alice McLaughlin, Mary Lou Menches, Lori Mestre, Ellen Noonan, Nancy Olson, Lilia Peters, Carole Rebeiz, Cathy Salika, Sue Schreiber, Margaret Stewart, Laura Theby, Mary Welle, and Peggy Whelan. December saints by Fr. George Wuellner. This issue was edited by Mary Lou Menches and paged by Jim Urban.

Quick fixin's from the kitchen of . . .

Judy Huelsbusch

BBQ Sausage Appetizers

2 packages mini sausages
1-1/2 c of your favorite BBQ sauce

Brown sausages over medium heat and place in an oven-proof casserole. Pour BBQ sauce over sausages, cover, and heat in oven at 375° for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally



until heated through. Uncover for the last 5 minutes. Serve with toothpicks.

If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Ellen Noonan (403-0979 or eknoon@comcast.net). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!

St. Patrick's Parish

December 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00 PM Centering Prayer 7:00 PM Pro Life	2 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Faith Sharing 6:30 PM Mystagogia 7:00 PM Great Adventure Bible Study	3 12:00 PM Men's Book Club 5:15 PM Children's Choir 6:30 PM Peace & Justice Ministries 6:30 PM Rel Ed, St. Joe 7:00 PM Baptism Preparation 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM Re-Membering Church	4 6:45 AM Men's Bible Study 6:00 PM Building and Grounds 6:30 PM JustFaith 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM RCIA	5 10:45 AM Mass, CCNH	6 6:00 PM Be Crazy with CREW and "Family Lunacy"
7 9:15 AM Rel Ed 12:00 PM Anointing of the Sick at Mass 5:15 PM Mass, Holy Day Vigil 6:00 PM CREW Mission Meeting 6:30 PM CREW 6:30 PM Vivo 7:00 PM Web Site	8 Immaculate Conception Holy Day Masses: 7 AM, 12:10 PM, 5:15 PM 7:00 PM Centering Prayer 7:00 PM CREW Care Packages Assembly	9 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:30 PM Mystagogia 7:00 PM Taizé Service 7:00 PM Great Adventure Bible Study	10 9:30 AM Funeral Schola 5:15 PM Children's Choir 6:30 PM Rel Ed Christmas Program, St. Joe 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM JustSkills 7:00 PM Re-Membering Church	11 6:45 AM Men's Bible Study 12:00 PM Seniors Lunch 5:30 PM Financial Affairs 6:00 PM CREW Social Justice Ed 6:30 PM JustFaith 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM RCIA	12 10:30 AM Mass, Care Center 10:45 AM Mass, CCNH 12:00 PM Widows Lunch	13 8:30 AM-1:00 PM Advent Retreat 6:15 PM More Great Dates
14 9:15 AM Rel Ed 8:30 AM-Noon Blood Pressure Screening 5:00-8:00 PM CREW Christmas Project, Catholic Worker House 6:30 PM Vivo Christmas Party	15 7:00 PM Centering Prayer 7:00 PM Communal Reconciliation, Holy Cross	16 12:00 PM Bible Study 6:00 PM Faith Sharing 6:30 PM Mystagogia 7:00 PM Communal Reconciliation, St. Patrick's	17 5:15 PM Children's Choir 6:30 PM Religious Education, St. Joe 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM JustSkills 7:00 PM Communal Reconciliation, St. Matthew's 7:00 PM <i>Simbang Gabi</i> Mass	18 6:45 AM Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM Just Faith 6:45 PM Parish Council 7:00 PM Choir 7:00 PM RCIA	19 10:30 AM Mass, Clark-Lindsey 10:45 AM Mass, CCNH	20
21 8:30-10:30 AM Library Open 10:15 AM Knights of Columbus	22 7:00 PM Centering Prayer	23 6:30 PM Mystagogia	24 Christmas Eve Masses: 4:00, 6:30, 10:30 PM	25 Christmas Day Mass, 10:30 AM Parish Offices Closed	26 Parish Offices Closed	27
28	29 7:00 PM Centering Prayer	30 6:00 PM Faith Sharing 6:30 PM Mystagogia	31 5:15 PM Mass, Holy Day Vigil	<p>Because this calendar is prepared in advance, be sure to check the bulletin to confirm actual dates and times of specific events.</p> <p>The deadline for the next issue of <i>In Focus</i> is December 7.</p>		