

# St. Patrick Parish IN FOCUS

www.stpaturbana.org

December 2022

## Why are you waiting?

Every year, we celebrate Advent and prepare for the coming of Jesus. Wait – really? Are we pretending that Jesus hasn't come yet? Are we saying that he is not actively engaged in our lives?

Are we supposed to act surprised when we find a baby in the manger?

No, liturgy isn't about pretending. Liturgy is an encounter with a very real, vibrant, present Jesus. We don't have to pretend that he is here,

or pretend that he is active among us, or pretend that he loves us. Jesus *is* here, active and loving. What we do need to do, however, is to *remember* that Jesus is here and active and loving. That's why our seasons, our scriptures, and our prayers are repeated throughout our lives. We need that repetition to help us remember.

To appreciate the gift of Jesus' presence, it helps to *remember* how deeply humanity needed him and how deeply each of us needs him. We remember that sin had no solution. We remember that prophets could only hope that God

was going to change the hearts of his people. We remember the call to justice and integrity that the prophets said would prepare us for his coming. And we need to remember that we are dependent on God's action to save us.



be ready for his action. What else can we do to prepare? We can give to those in need. We can look for ways to share our faith. We can ponder the scriptures. We can pray for a greater welcome to Jesus' action in our lives.

Now, it may be that part of your life is a flurry of shopping, cooking, baking, decorating, and partying. That's okay. The faith isn't just for hermits living in the desert, it's for every one of us. Advent can remind us to do these things with intentionality. We don't do them because the ads demand it. We do

See **Why ... waiting?** on page 2

## Lessons and Carols

The Advent season is rich with memorable scripture readings, hymns, and carols. Want to savor them, in community with your fellow parishioners? Come to the Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 11.

The service of Lessons and Carols developed in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. It was a way to celebrate the coming of Jesus outside the usual Eucharistic service, making it a welcoming event to be shared by Christians of a variety of faiths.

The service usually consists of nine scripture readings, or, as they are known, "lessons." They tell the story of how God prepared the world for the coming of Jesus, and end with a call to share the good news of Jesus with the world. Interspersed among the readings are hymns, carols, and choral works that shed light on the scriptures.



This year's Lessons and Carols will be simpler than some of our past ceremonies, with more opportunity for everyone to sing the familiar hymns and carols. Come yourself, and feel free to invite some friends from other churches!

# Why ... waiting?

from page 1

them because we love the people around us, because being together is a chance to share our selves, because Jesus loves us and we can share that love with others.

We come to Advent with joyful confidence because we know that God has been with us in the past, as he was with his chosen people. We trust that God will be with us now and always, especially in the person of Jesus. We trust in his love. No pretending. This is real.

## Women of St. Patrick's fall luncheon and meeting

Friends and fellow parishioners joined together on Sunday, October 23, for the WSP fall luncheon and meeting in St. Brigid Hall. Attendees were asked to bring salads or desserts to accompany the soups and breads made by the Women of St. Patrick's board members, Anna Conner, Bernadette Nelson, Donna Rinkenberger, Eileen Schmitt, Janet Althaus, and Roxanne Munch. Most participants tried several of the soups and chilies, then couldn't resist the sumptuous dessert table.



both a daytime drop-in center and an overnight, sober shelter. The group is presently working with Champaign Township to create a low-barrier shelter for homeless men.

Cheryl pointed out that we could help by donating money or winter items like gloves or hand warmers. We could volunteer, and pray for them and their clients. We could raise awareness of homelessness by attending One Winter Night on February 3. Additional information may be found on their website ([www.cuathome.us](http://www.cuathome.us)). The WSP donated \$100 to C-U at Home.

The next event for the Women of St. Patrick will be the Craft, Cookie, and Basket sale on December 11. A wide selection of baskets, edible treats, and crafts will be available this year. Because cookies ran out so quickly last year, they are hoping for a lot more to be donated this time around!

Remember, all women of the parish are automatically members of WSP, and all are welcome to attend and participate in WSP events. Come join us!

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*I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever.*



After eating, the meeting began with the treasurer's report. Treasurer Anna Conner reported that the Cellar-to-Garret Sale raised \$11,800. After \$1,800 for expenses were deducted, the net total was \$10,000.

Parishioner Susan Nagele gave a brief update on the Maryknoll Lay Missioners and their important work in

## Serve and grow spiritually with SVDP

Our parish's food pantry is called the SVDP Food Pantry because it is run by the St. Patrick conference (chapter) of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Begun in France in 1833 by Blessed Frederic Ozanam, a lawyer and professor at the Sorbonne who guided a group of students who wanted to live their faith by serving the poor, the Society was named after St. Vincent de Paul, a 17th-century French Catholic priest known for his commitment to serving the poor with compassion, humility, and generosity.

SVDP is now an International Catholic Organization with 47,000 conferences across 130 countries. Its mission is to be "a network of friends, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need."

Traditionally, SVDP volunteers reached out to those in need through home visits, but the St. Patrick conference mainly operates the parish food pantry and provides Thanksgiving baskets every year.

About three years ago, SVDP began to offer limited amounts of emergency financial assistance to people in need. Grants are decided on a case-by-case basis and are given only for a special need or temporary circumstance rather than in response to an ongoing financial problem. A person in

need who calls the parish office with a request will be put in touch with a trained SVDP volunteer who will take their information and explain guidelines. Someone seeking help must be a resident of Urbana (or, in some cases, St. Joseph); help is limited to once a year. Since the program began, our SVDP has given out \$6000 to \$10,000 each year.



SVDP conferences also participate in a "twin" program, in which they donate a fixed sum on a regular basis to a specific SVDP conference in a developing country or lower income parish in the US so that those groups can better help their own communities. This year, our SVDP donated \$1000 to Ukraine relief through the diocesan SVDP.

Our parish SVDP and food pantry are funded by generous St. Patrick parishioners through personal donations, memorials, and bequests in wills. When using the online giving section of the parish website ([www.stpaturbana.org](http://www.stpaturbana.org)), you can choose to make a donation directly to SVDP.

Unfortunately, our SVDP conference has very few members and only a handful of people to carry out their activities. For example, normally a SVDP conference is required to hold two meetings per month: a business meeting and a meeting devoted to spiritual development. Our SVDP does not currently have officers other than the treasurer, who keeps a close eye on the books. Food pantry coordinator Sally Czapar oversees both the food pantry and the emergency funds program, very carefully managing expenditures. Our SVDP could really use new members to help it grow and enable it to carry out its mission.

Would you like to grow spiritually as you answer our Gospel call to love and serve our neighbors in need? Consider getting involved with SVDP!

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*A place of beauty,  
unbelievable before,  
where you want only  
what you have—  
could Heaven be more?*

—Ruth R. Rains

# Holy Cross Happenings

The first quarter of the Holy Cross school year is in the books, and with it go a couple of other important “firsts”: the last few months have seen the start of a marching band program as well as the inaugural season of a Lady Crusaders softball team. Students joyfully participated in those activities alongside their usual studies and extracurricular activities, all of which are back to more-or-less pre-COVID strength.

One sport, perhaps enjoyed more participation than the others at the height of COVID restrictions, is cross country. And, as it turns out, HCS really puts the “Cross” in cross country! This year, Holy Cross hosted the IESA Sectional meet, at which the girls’ team emerged winners, while the boys’ team took third place. Both teams advanced to State.

Also as of this update, students and teachers patiently await the completion of the playground renovations. A brick wall is being installed to replace the low wooden one that surrounded the play structures. The pea gravel (famous for ending up in the toes of little shoes) is being replaced with recycled shredded rubber to give the kids a softer landing.

While teachers and students wait for these upgrades to be completed, recess has included a lot of blacktop-based activities. Although the children are undoubtedly

anxious to be reunited with their favorite play structures, they have been getting plenty of time to brush up on their basketball skills. Hopefully it pays off when winter sports begin in a few short months!

Holy Cross’ traditional celebrations of Halloween and All Saints Day were back to full strength this year for the first time since 2019. The middle school Halloween party and grades K-5 Fall Festival were held on the weekends leading up to Halloween. At the All Saints Day Mass on the morning of November 1, the 4th graders presented themselves in costume as the saints they chose to study throughout the month of October. *All you holy men and women, pray for us!*

Let us all also continue to pray for Holy Cross School: its staff, students, families, and community of supporters. May God continue to prosper the 2022-23 school year!

Please contact [rachmcmill@gmail.com](mailto:rachmcmill@gmail.com) if there is anything you’d like to see featured in an upcoming installment of Holy Cross Happenings or if you have any additions/corrections to report.

Interested in having your children attend Holy Cross School? Schedule a tour of the school by calling Principal Greg Koerner (217-356-9521). Financial help may be available; contact St. Patrick’s parish office (367-2665) for more details.

See **Holy Cross** on page 5



Our band is on the march! Here they are in the Labor Day parade.



Cross country - first place for the girls’ team and third place for the boys’!



Preschoolers check out progress on the playground rebuild.

# Holy Cross



Ms. O'Dea's 4<sup>th</sup> graders portray some well-known saints.

## First Quarter Honor Roll:

Highest Honors  
 Sarah Surratt  
 Grace Arend  
 Eirann Byard  
 Prunella Tembo

High Honors  
 Brendan Byard  
 Elizabeth Withers-Sickles

Honors  
 Miles Hamby  
 Emily Surratt



The newly formed Lady Crusaders softball team poses under a late summer sky.



**Q: What is holy water? What makes it holy? What is it used for? Why do we use it?**

**A:** Well, in a manner of speaking, all water is holy because God created it, and God declared it “good” in the Creation narratives.

Have you slaked your thirst with water on a hot day? Have you splashed into a lake or pool and enjoyed the feel of cool water flowing against your skin? If you hand-wash dishes, do you ever let water run through your fingers for the sheer pleasure of it? Have you experienced a severe drought with the nonessential use of water discouraged? Do you realize that most of your body is made up of water? Water is a great gift. Yes, all water, in some sense, is holy.

In the sense we’re talking about, however, water is blessed and thereby considered “holy.” It is blessed (usually by a priest) for many uses: for baptism (Jesus was baptized with water in the River Jordan); for blessing persons; places (churches, homes, offices); objects (rosaries, prayerbooks, medals, palms) and even pets on the feast of St. Francis. And, in hopefully rare instances, it is used to repel evil. (St. Teresa of Avila declared: “I know by frequent experience that there is nothing which puts the devils to flight like holy water.”)

The blessing of water during the Easter Vigil gives it a special place in our liturgies and sacramental rites. Holy water is used in baptism, of course, but sprinkling with holy water also is a part of the ceremonies of other sacraments and in funeral services for the deceased.

We are perhaps most familiar with the use of holy water as a reminder and renewal of our baptism, dipping our fingers in it and making the Sign of the Cross upon entering or leaving a church. Some of us take home holy water in small bottles for various purposes, perhaps to bless a member of the family who is ill or suffering.

Yes, water is a great gift, a gift made holy in its very conception, that serves as a continual reminder that we are God’s adopted children through our baptism into the Body of Christ.

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Gather us in and hold us forever,  
 Gather us in and make us your own,  
 Gather us in, all peoples together.  
 Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

—Marty Haugen

## A Christmas welcome to all

On behalf of our parish community, we welcome you to our celebration of Christmas. One of the most significant and joyful parts of this holy season is gathering with others to celebrate it. All of us who share faith in Jesus, whose birth we celebrate this day, are glad to be together to do so.

As always, all are welcome here: male and female, young and old, rich and poor, gay or straight, married, divorced, or single, parishioner or visitor. You belong here because you belong to Christ. Jesus is the host here, and he welcomes you as part of his Body.

You may come with a peaceful heart or with a heart burdened by concerns about your children, your elderly parents, your job, your marriage, or your future. You may be young and full of enthusiasm about your faith and your future, or you may be unsure about who God is and where life is leading you. You may be older and quietly reflective about what your life has been. You may have regrets or be weary as you approach the final chapters of your life. However you come, you belong here because you belong to Christ. Jesus is the host here, and he welcomes you as part of his Body.

You may be alone or with those you love most in life. You may have a supportive network or you may be pained a broken marriage, or relationship with a child, or friend. You may be good about how your you may be battling unemployment, difficulties, substance stresses. You belong here, and he part of his Body.

You may feel you may be uneasy relationship with God Church. You may feel at home here or you may feel uncomfortable because of choices you have made. Whatever you feel, you belong here because you belong to Christ. Jesus is the host here, and he welcomes you as part of his Body.

You may be new here. You may be of another Christian tradition. You may be searching like the Magi or cautious like the shepherds. It may have been a long time since you joined us to worship God at Mass, or this may be a place where your faith regularly feels most at home. Whatever your situation, you belong here because you belong to Christ. Jesus is the host here, and he welcomes you as part of his Body.

If you have been away, welcome back.

If you come here regularly, it is good to see you.

If you have trouble believing in Jesus, look around you. The Body of Christ has come to Mass here today.

Everyone is welcome here.

Everyone belongs here.

You belong here.



of relationships by a recent loss, a fractured parent, sibling, may feel really life is going or with financial abuse, or other here because you Jesus is the host welcomes you as

comfortable or about your or with the

## St. Patrick's responds to World Mission Sunday

Congratulations, St. Patrick's parishioners: you have a big heart and a bigger wallet. Thank you for so generously responding to World Mission Sunday, October 23.

You may remember that a year and half ago Father John Bosco Mijuni first visited St.



Fr. John Bosco Mijuni

Patrick's. He is a priest from Uganda who is serving in the Diocese of Peoria. He celebrated Mass here on April 20, 2021, begging us to aid him in building a home mission church in Mbrurar, Uganda. We responded with donations totaling \$7,441.

This year, on October 23, Mission Sunday, Father Bosco returned with another plea to help him finish this church. He explained that he needed \$50,000 for the roof, interior work, plumbing, and electricity. You listened and supported him this time with an offering of \$12,482,70, bringing the total of the two appeals to \$19,923.70. Your generosity was greatly appreciated!

If you missed Father Bosco, envelopes are still available in the pews. Or you can send your donation to the parish office in an envelope marked "Mission Appeal". Thank you!

# Trunk or Treat Days



I asked Jesus how I could serve him,  
 and he replied that he will be loving me each moment of this day  
 through the people I meet,  
 the sights I see,  
 the sounds I hear,  
 the air I breathe  
 and the life in my body.  
 He said, "Just let me love you."

As I squirmed, I said,  
 "Well, you made me this way"  
 as an excuse for not being worthy,  
 for not being perfect.  
 Jesus smiled and replied,  
 "Yes, I did make you this way.  
 I do good work."

—Clarence Heller

## Quick Fixin's from the kitchen of . . . Mary Lou Menches

### Barbara's Winter Salad

- 1/4 c Italian dressing
- 3 T honey
- 2 T maple syrup
- 1 T peanut oil
- 2 T chopped walnuts
- 8 oz pkg mixed greens
- 2 c cooked chunked chicken
- 1 pear, cored, thinly sliced
- 1/4 c dark pitted cherries, drained



In a small saucepan, over low heat, combine Italian dressing, honey, maple syrup, peanut oil, and walnuts; heat 5 minutes or until warmed. Place greens on a large platter. Top with chicken, pear slices, and cherries. Pour dressing mixture over the salad, toss gently, and serve immediately.

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*If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send it to Mary Lou Menches (344-1125, mmenches@illinois.edu). The only requirement is that it be easy and quick to prepare!*



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*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.

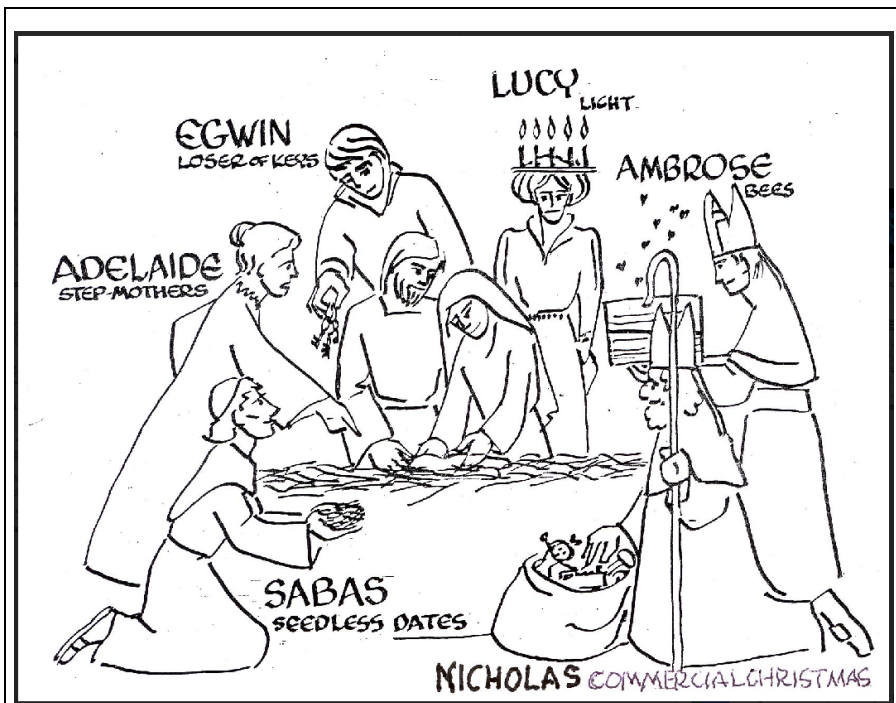
Please send news items to infocusstpats@gmail.com. You may also send them to any Communications Committee member (listed with contact information below). All submissions are subject to review and/or editing by the committee and staff. Bylines are generally omitted.

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December Patron Saints by Fr. George Wuellner



The deadline for submitting information, articles, and news items for the next (January) issue of *In Focus* is **Sunday, December 4.**