

# The Canticle of St. Francis

Published quarterly by St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church  
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Parish Newsletter: Volume 14, Issue 1

Spring 2009

## Parish Common Conference 2009



On January 24, 2009 St. Francis of Assisi Parish held our *third* Common Conference. Over 300 parishioners enjoyed this daylong event, but we had an empty chair saved for you. Our keynote speaker, Fr. Bob Hater spoke of “Finding God in the Stories of Our Lives”.



Thirty workshops on a wide variety of faith topics ranging from Christian living to Scripture to spirituality were offered throughout the day. “Listening for the Voice of God”, “New Life in the Spirit of Paul”, and “Forgiving: Freeing Space in Your Head & Life” resonated with most of the participants. Teens enjoyed “Spirit of Service”, “Dating”, “Finding God’s Image”, and “Where Am I Going?”. Approximately half of the workshops were given by our own parishioners!

Sessions for Adults and Teens

Elementary school children participated in the day with a special program of their own—a mini version of vacation bible school.



This was not just a day to experience and learn more about our religion, but to recognize on a greater scale, our parish family and hopefully deepen our faith. If you were unable to attend the conference this year, we look forward to seeing you in 2011!



### Keynote speaker:

Fr. Bob Hater, a priest of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, has been a teacher at both the high school and university levels. Currently, he is a Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology: Athenaeum of Ohio and National Theological Consultant for Harcourt Religion Publisher. Author of over 15 books, he has won the Catholic Press Association Award for one of his most recent, *When a Catholic Marries a Non-Catholic*.



Above: “Let my people go!” Moses (and the children) exclaimed to the Pharaoh. Forty-seven children spent the day living bible stories and playing learning games in the crocodile swamp while their parents attended adult workshops.

## Mark Your Calendar—Spring 2009



February 3 - April 4, 2009: **Tax Assistance Program**- Saturdays, 10:30AM to 12:30PM in the Parish Office. By appointment only-call 769-2550 (during business hours).

March 14: **Catholic Business People's Connection** 8:30am school library / Nick Synko 734-332-8800, ext. 213

March 17: **SENIOR Citizens LENTEN program & lunch** / 10AM / PAC / Sue Bemis / 483-6351.

March 17, 24 & 31: **Values, Money & Credit**—attend one or all Tuesdays / 6:30—8:00 pm in PAC. To Register, call Terry Jones (734-222-3943).

March 20, April 17, May 15: **Serve A Meal for the Hungry** on 3rd Friday / 3PM or 5PM / Delonis Center Shelter / Bridget McGillicuddy / 665-9549.

March 23: **Meditation Group** / Mondays 7:00 – 8pm / Chapel / Paul 734-665-6802

March 26: **Guadalupe Group** / Thursdays 1:00 – 3pm / Nursery / Mary Carmen 734-483-0820

March 26, repeated March 30: **Q & A on Buying a Home**/ 7– 8:30PM PAC / Tammi Ebenhoeh 669-5910.

March 27: **Mother/Child Network** / 2nd & 4th Fridays 10:00 – 12:00pm / Nursery / Anna Mae 734-418-2435

April 3: **M.O.M.S. Group** / 1st & 3rd Fridays 10:00 – 12:00pm / Chapel / Janine 734-913-9418

April 5-Palm Sunday: **Lenten Sack contributions are returned** at all Masses / Scott Wright 821-2121.

April 6: **Knitting Group** / 7:00 – 8:30pm / Music Room / Catherine 734-761-1421

April 9-12: **Triduum & Easter Sunday** (see schedule below)

April 15: **Infertility Support Group** / 7:00 – 9:00pm / Church Library / Jennifer 734-645-2567

**April 25: Rebuilding Together** (AKA: "Christmas In April") one-day program of home repair for a "person in need" / Scott Wright / 821-2121.

April 25-26: **YA<sup>2</sup> ACHT-Young Adult Retreat—single or married 20-30's**. Jen 821-2126 or jen@stfrancisa2.org

April 26: **Parish Health Fair** 10AM-1PM After the 8:45AM and 10:30 AM Masses/ School Gym / Danaica Watson, RN 821-2115. May 2-3: **H.S. Youth Spring Retreat** - Jen Delvaux 821-2126

May 9: **Educational Trust Fund Benefit Event**, 5:30 pm Four Points Sheraton, Colleen Pierce / 734.821.2208

May 17: **H.S. Graduation Mass & Brunch**. Jen / 821-2126

May 26 & 30: **Eucharistic Minister Training**-May 26 at 7pm & May 30 at 10am / Barb 821-2123.

June 8: **St. Francis School 8th Grade Graduation @ 6 p.m.** in church. Sara Collins, Principal / 734.821.2200

June 8 - 14 (and again October 19-25, 2009): **Hosting at Shelter for Homeless Families**, IHN - Alpha House in Ann Arbor / shift times / Scott Wright / 821-2121.

June 9: **Ice Cream Social & Car Raffle Drawing**. Drawing at 8:00 pm, Colleen Pierce / 734.821.2208.

June 24: **H.S. Cedar Point Day**, for details & reservation call Jen 821-2126.

July 20 – 24: **Vacation Bible School 2009**. contact: Ellen Ward (821-2132)

### Lent Communal Penance Services

**Family:** Monday, March 30 at 5:00 p.m. in church

**All Parish:** Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. in church

### TRIDUUM/EASTER 2009 MASSES

Holy Thursday, April 9: 7:00 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 10: 12pm Stations of the Cross enacted  
1:15 pm Lord's Passion

6:30 pm Good Friday Evening Prayer

Holy Saturday, April 11: 8:00 pm Easter Vigil & Mass (no 5PM mass today)

Easter Sunday, April 12: 7:00 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m. (in Church)  
and 10:45 a.m. (in PAC)

Note: There will be no 5PM mass on Holy Saturday & Easter Sunday





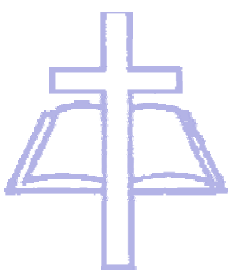


# A growing community of faith

## Anointing of Catechumens

Following the homily on Sunday, February 8th, Fr. John called forward the catechumens and offered the Church's prayer for their continuing progress toward full membership in the Catholic Church.

*"We pray for these your servants who have opened their ears and hearts to your word. Grant that they may grasp your moment of grace."*



Fr. John then anointed their foreheads and hands with these words, *"We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, who lives and reigns for ever and ever."*

Please watch for our catechumens as well as our candidates at mass and elsewhere; greet them and offer them your personal encouragement on their path to Baptism and full reception into the Catholic Church at Easter. They have already accomplished much, and it is our responsibility to give them prayerful support and let them know that we are eager to accept them into our parish family.

## Training Small Group Facilitators

Pete Ries, Director of Adult Faith Formation, RCIA and Evangelization for the Lansing Diocese shared his expertise on group facilitation with an eager assembly of people. Together they explored the role of a group facilitator, common mistakes made in facilitating discussions, and tools for helping everyone to feel comfortable participating in discussions.



Pete Ries shares some tips for facilitating



Participants share from their experience.

Ten people from the training signed up to facilitate small groups this Lent! Armed with this training we hope for some wonderful small group experiences to share with you in the next newsletter!

## SERVICE + JUSTICE

### Letters of Thanks for Parishioner Generosity

#### **K**nitting Into the Mystery: *A Shawl Ministry*

During the Christmas season our St. Francis Shawl Ministry group delivered to St. Benedict Church, Detroit (our sister parish) the following hand-made knit items: 6 shawls/ lap blankets; 35 hats; 17 scarves; 2 pairs of mittens.



*“On behalf of St. Benedict Parish, I wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the beautiful hand made gifts you gave us to distribute to the needy. They are warming the souls, as well as the bodies, of those who have received them.  
Betty Lind, President, St. Benedict Women’s Club*

#### **G**iving Tree

*On behalf of the families that you and your congregation adopted for Christmas, (I want) to say thank you for being a tremendous blessing to them! It was because of your great love and compassion for the less fortunate, that they had a wonderful Christmas. I look forward to each year of working with you and your congregation.*

*May this year be a real blessing to all of you.  
Naomi Williams, Hope Clinic, Inc.*

#### **I**ncreased Need Met by Your Generosity

*Hope Clinic wishes to thank everyone at St. Francis who contributed food, personal items and time, in an effort to help those in need. Thank you for opening your hearts and hands to those less fortunate.*

*In 2008, Hope distributed more than 12,000 bags of groceries—an increase of nearly 70% over 2007. This would not have been possible without the support of St. Francis. We are blessed and overwhelmed by your generosity.*

*“Through the evidence of this service, you are glorifying God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ and the generosity of your contribution to them and to all others”  
-2 Corinthians 9:13*

#### January Special Collection

#### A Thank You from

#### **O**utpatient Oncology Chaplain:

*I have tried to find the words to thank the members of St. Francis for their recent donation to my ministry in oncology at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Your support of this important ministry overwhelmed me. I thank God for each and every day that He gives me to be supportive to people going through the journey of cancer. He has blessed me in this work and your parish has also blessed me through your support.*

*The words that I want to say are these, "Thank you and God bless each and every one of you. Through you, God is using me. Thank you for your prayers and support!"*

*David McNeil,  
Outpatient Oncology Chaplain  
St. Joseph Mercy Health System*

## Perry Nursery School Christmas Party a fun success!

### *Parishioner Chris Kempton Writes . . .*

Thanks to you, our parish again shared the joy of Christ at Christmas time with those less fortunate. In the past each year we have had plenty of food, helpers, and so much fun. This year the party grew to host more guests. In addition to Perry Nursery School, of Ann Arbor, 35 more guests from the Child Care Network of Washtenaw County, were invited to join us. Those who ate were 195 people, which included some servers. This year all the food was eaten, the kids were entertained, the food was very good and well handled, and the decorations were the best.

Each year this party allows St. Francis parishioners to connect to members of our community with whom we



might not otherwise intermingle. One of the best aspects of the event is that it is not a charity meeting, but truly a joyous celebration among neighbors. This year's party was no exception, with friendly food and conversation, boisterous caroling, and rollicking games with a merry Santa presiding.

This party shows that St. Francis of Assisi parish is not "all talk" when it comes to making room at the inn during Advent. Thank you to those who participated in bringing this blessing to us all.

-- Chris Kempton

Thank you, especially to our coordinators: Roger Parlett (food); Zach Weathers (decorations); Chris Kempton (activities); And to all of you more than 70 people who helped. Please remember to sign-up to help again next year.



## Car Donation Transfers

Elizabeth, a WCC student is the most recent recipient of a car from the St. Francis St. Vincent DePaul society. Because of this program, and the generosity of parishioners who donate cars, she will be able to find employment and continue her studies. Her plans are to get a degree in social work at EMU and return to Kenya to do microfinance. The St. Vincent DePaul car program encourages donations of cars and finds working poor to receive them.

### **Thank you.**

*I am humbled and very joyful. May God bless you as you continue to touch the lives of many and uplift the lowly. Thank you.*

~ Elizabeth





## Shift Happens . . .



Speaker Lisa Mininni shares her story of change

### Shift Happens! Now How Do I Navigate It?

Nearly 40 people undergoing various changes in their lives gathered in the music room last November to hear Lisa Mininni, noted speaker and author of “*Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets of Navigating Change*,” share her story of change. Participants left with a new enthusiasm as well as helpful tools for navigating change in all aspects of life.



## St. Francis Scrapbookers Photo Memories

On Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> the Parish Activity Center was a scrapbooking haven for more than 40 St. Francis women who gathered to organize, decorate and preserve their photos in albums. Those present shared not only a fun, relaxing time together but also shared community as they looked at each others photos and shared the stories related to those photos.

Participants were glad to have the time and place to be with friends new and established as they created lasting books of precious memories.



Scrapbookers spread their supplies and photos out on tables and get organized!



Young moms share photos and stories of their babies

# Parishioners Find Help Here at Home!

## a response to the economic downturn

At St. Francis we are helping each other during these troubled times through a variety of resources. Each week listed on a special page in our FORUM bulletin are specific events organized especially by St. Francis community members to help others right here at home. For example, the programs like: *Housing Foreclosure Prevention* served about 24 participants. The *Budgeting 101 Workshop* served about 17 participants so far. We look forward to many more events to address concerns in the following areas: Career Search; Emotional & Health Assistance; Fiscal Assistance, Spiritual Assistance, Family Issues Help. Some recent events included:

### Career Search:

**Career Transition** workshops

**JOB SEEKERS Career Network** for on-going employment support/ideas & networking by fellow parishioners with jobs.

### Fiscal Assistance:

- Coupon workshop to **Cut Your Grocery Bill in Half!**
- **Values & Money** financial planning and ways to pay down debt and/ or save more
- Friends of **Frugal Francis** share ways to reduce costs...
- **A Community Kitchen in the PAC / Reduce Grocery Bill** (*coming soon*)

### Spiritual Assistance:

**Spiritual Direction** allows us to explore the spiritual aspects of all of life's events. Call Janene Ternes at 821-2122 for more information or to arrange an exploratory, confidential visit with one of our experienced Spiritual Directors.

**Finding God in Troubled Times ...** A parish mini-mission to discover the presence of God amidst our suffering...

### Emotional & Health Assistance:

- **From Stress To Serenity** a stress management workshop
- **Parish Counseling Assistance Program (CAP).** Licensed professional therapists from our parish are available to meet with you privately and confidentially at the Parish Offices
- **Stephen Ministry** is for people in need of friendly support by well-trained lay ministers.

### Family Issues:

**Retrouvaille** is a Christian peer ministry designed to help heal troubled marriages.

**Divorced and Separated Companions:** Men and women who have been through divorce and/or separation themselves are available to listen and walk with individuals who are currently in the midst of a divorce or separation.

### For more details about these programs

see the weekly FORUM bulletin or contact the parish office (734) 769-2550. Visit:

[www.stfrancisa2.com/help/](http://www.stfrancisa2.com/help/)

## St. Francis Altar Servers



Last summer Fr. John organized a small committee to plan outings for the altar servers at St. Francis. In this way the servers could get to know each other and have some fun, in appreciation for the service they provide the parish community.



On July 25th altar servers and their families boarded a chartered bus to see a Lansing Lugnuts baseball game. The occasion was the Knights of Columbus Family Night to celebrate vocations, and the St. Francis K of C generously provided



both the bus and the tickets for the servers. The Lugnuts struggled, but Bishop Boyea demonstrated a strong arm on his ceremonial pitch. Everyone in the stands, including many priests, seminarians, and religious, enjoyed the warm summer evening, friendly atmosphere, and cheering on the Lugnuts. As A.J. Snowden remarked, *"the trip there was fun, the food was great, the game was exciting, and the fireworks at the end sparkled in God's great sky."*

The summer went out with a splash as the servers met at Rolling Hills water park on August 24th for a barbecue, after an afternoon spent enjoying the wave pool, lazy river, and water slides. Fr. John proved himself to be a master at grilling burgers and dogs, and the servers brought many delicious foods to round out the meal. Next year we hope to actually get Fr. John into the water park.



Being an altar server is an opportunity available to all St. Francis youth in the fifth grade and up. The next training sessions for altar servers will take place this fall—watch the Forum for the dates. All current servers are invited to attend this summer's outings, which will be announced via email as summer draws nearer.

## Senior Citizens (55 & faster) @ St. Francis



In November, our Veterans Day Celebration with a traditional Thanksgiving meal was a hit. We especially enjoyed our speaker from the Yankee Air Museum.



Watch the weekly **Forum** for **upcoming monthly programs**. For more photos see: [www.stfrancisa2.com/seniors/](http://www.stfrancisa2.com/seniors/)





# St Francis of Assisi Catholic School News

## Book Sale for Orphanage

This year, St. Francis School has been sponsoring a year-long service project to help build a playground area for the Home of Hope orphanage in India. To help raise money for this project, 3rd and 5th grade students and parents sponsored a week-long **Used Book Sale to Benefit Home of Hope** during **Catholic Schools Week**. The idea was to involve students in an active way in their service project. Not only did Home of Hope benefit, but the St. Francis community (by offering a recycling opportunity along with a chance to get books at a low cost) and local charities that received leftover materials did as well. Many school families as well as parish members helped by donating their used books and by purchasing books during the sale.

There were between 3,000 and 4,000 books and movies donated with nearly \$1,400.00 raised. We could not have had such a great turn out if it weren't for the amazing parent volunteers and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who helped prepare the books for the sale. A special thanks to Ann Bogits, who came up with the idea, Ms. Collins, Mrs. Ruselowski, Mrs. Hendricks, Fr. Jim and all the people who donated and purchased books and movies. The remaining books will go to the Pregnancy Help Center, Children's Homeless Services, and other charitable organizations.

## Open House

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, St. Francis School held its annual **Open House** to start off National **Catholic Schools Week**. Over fifty families came to tour the school and meet our teachers. We had many new registrations and continue to receive them every day. If you have a child in grades kindergarten through eighth and are interested in sending your child to St. Francis, please call the school office today at 734.821.2200 or visit us on our new website at: [www.stfrancisa2.com/school](http://www.stfrancisa2.com/school).

## Upcoming Events

**Science Fair Open House:** March 4, all day (PAC)

**Lunch with the Principal:** March 6 and 27, 12:00-1:30pm (School Library)

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Play:** Thur., May 21, 7:00pm (PAC)

## Preschool Class

The St. Francis School Preschool Classroom is a very busy place! This classroom is open to 4-year-old children and provides families with a wonderful opportunity to integrate their children into the St. Francis School setting. The curriculum focuses on social interaction and kindergarten readiness.



This year, the preschoolers have participated in many enrichment activities that encourage understanding of the world around them. The Ann Arbor Fire Department brought a truck to school. The preschool children were able to view the truck close-up.

Dean especially liked *"when they put their sirens on."*

The visit to Trader Joe's helped the children learn about nutrition and healthy eating habits. Anna enjoyed *"going into the cold room"* best.

Reaching out to the parish community is another opportunity the children have. The children

planted bulbs in front of the parish office and are looking forward to seeing the flowers come up this spring. Kent said, *"I got to learn about flowers and got to dig in the dirt!"*



Most recently, the children visited the church with Fr. John. According to Emily, *"We were learning about the baptismal fire and the water where they dip the babies."*

The children's comments show that they are active, involved and articulate!!

# High School Youth!

**<http://hs.stFrancisA2.org>**

The High School Youth Ministry! Whether we're enjoying a regular Sunday Night Youth Group, on Retreat, or just having fun at a Youth Group Party, this winter has been busy!

We have also been working on our website and creating a special page for parents.

- The youth group website is: <http://hs.stfrancisa2.org/>
- Parents can view their site at:  
<http://parent-page.blogspot.com/>



Using play dough to think about Creation.



Rock Band! With teens and the adult leaders playing, the talent was excellent and the entertainment was hysterical.



## The Winter Retreat – Narnia! Stay tuned for the May 2-3 retreat!





## Discovering the Faith as a Family: After the Family Session, Join in for the Adult Class!

**Family Religious Education** offers time for families to learn and engage in faith activities together. The program also allows time for children to study their grade appropriate catechism, while the adults have the opportunity to gather for discussions on various faith topics. Why attend the adult sessions? Some of the participants responded:

☺ As I attend the Adult class, I believe it sets an example forming children. However, I get a far greater benefit than just setting an example: Through (the instructor) Cruz (Juarez) and our discussions, I am growing to understand God and my religion better and gaining new tools to cope with everyday events with God.—*Brian*

☺ It's a wonderful opportunity to get together with other adults in a similar situation, who are raising children and supporting and teaching them their Christian growth. Cruz guides us through important realistic daily issues with a fresh look on how to incorporate our faith, the church's teachings, and Christ's love in it all. Excellent!—*Ramona*



*Pictured:* Youth in middle school walk to their classrooms after gathering together in their own large group session.



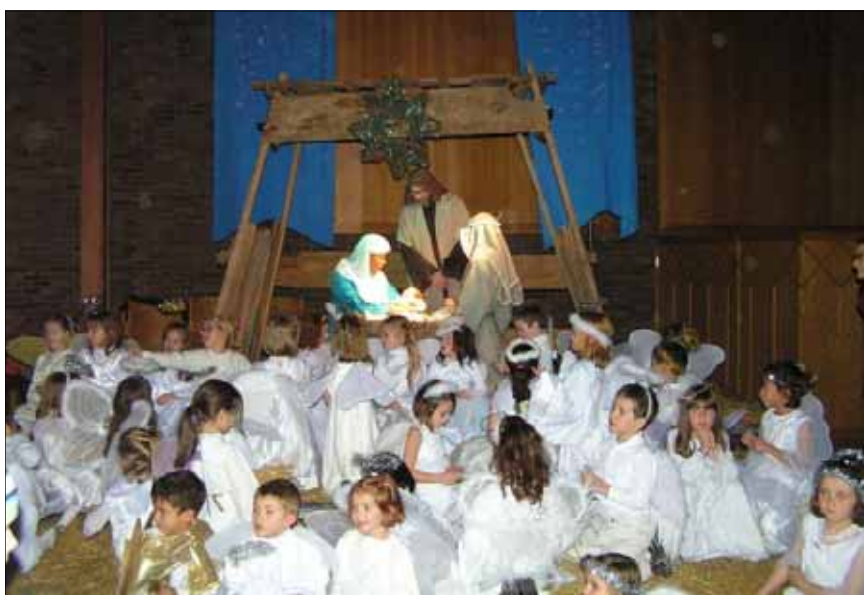
*Above:* Families engage in activities in preparation for Lent. After the general session, children study in classrooms, while the adults are invited to join in adult faith sharing groups. Come and join the adult session on Sundays at 11:15 a.m. in the music room.

☺ (The adult education classes are for me) therapy sessions to understand that our troubles are shared. (Sessions) show ways our religion and community provide the relationships to help us through.—*Tatiana and Taras*

**Come and join the adult session on Sundays at 11:15 a.m. in the music room.** We think you will enjoy your time with us! Call Ellen Ward at 821-2132 or [ward@rc.net](mailto:ward@rc.net) for information.

*This Lent, you and your family  
are invited to come and  
experience a new event on the  
**Life of Christ**  
presented in song and light drama  
**Sunday, March 22**  
at 6:30 p.m. in church.*

*The event is followed by a reception  
in the Parish Activities Center  
(PAC) featuring foods from the  
many cultures represented here at  
St. Francis.*



*(On right):* The Nativity Procession last December told the story of the birth of Christ.

For more information on a variety of Religious events, see the parish website [www.stfrancisa2.com](http://www.stfrancisa2.com) or contact Ellen Ward at 734-821-2132 or [ward@rc.net](mailto:ward@rc.net)



# St Francis of Assisi Worship



## Handbells @ Metro Airport

In December, the St. Francis Handbell Choir entertained travelers by ringing a selection of Christmas music in the McNamara Terminal as part of the Detroit Metropolitan Airport holiday entertainment program.



## Valentine's Day Mass

(below) Over 50 couples and their families gathered on February 14th for a special mass in celebration of Marriage.



## Burning Palms

(right) In preparation for Lent, last year's palms were burned to make the ashes used on Ash Wednesday.



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