

From Darkness to Light: We await the Newborn King

Greetings and a Blessed Christmas to you all!



I know that you are receiving this Canticle in the midst of the busyness of what the world calls the “*Holiday Season*.” My prayer is that you will find a few minutes during these hectic days to stop and reflect on the real purpose of Advent and Christmas, and that in some way this Canticle will act as an invitation to you and your family, to join us here at St. Francis Parish as we prepare for and celebrate the great mystery of Christ’s birth among us.

As I write this short introduction, I am reminded of the words of Pope Francis from his letter, the *Joy of the Gospel*, in which he described the Church as “*a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.*” We here at St. Francis Parish strive to live up to this ideal and to welcome all who seek that “*good life.*”

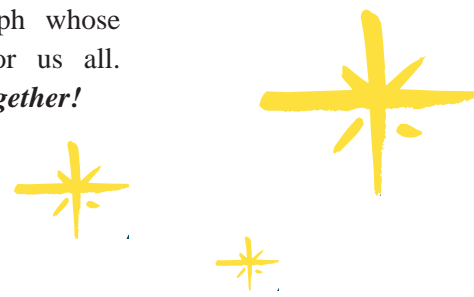
In a break with tradition, this Canticle focuses not so much on what has already passed but on what is yet to be. We hope that it will encourage you and your family to be part of the many liturgies and activities we offer during these holy seasons and beyond. In these dark days of winter, we once again invite you, your families and your friends to join us in our Advent journey, as together we prepare our hearts and our homes for the birth of the newborn King, Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Each Sunday we will light our Advent Wreath: one additional candle each week until the wreath shines forth as a bright and hope-filled beacon. *It is this holy light that will mark the steps of our journey as we make our way to the manger to encounter the new born Christ.* Along the way we will hear scripture passages retelling the great events surrounding his birth and be joined by such notables as Isaiah the Prophet of hope and consolation, Paul so full of encouragement and challenge, John the Baptist with his ever relevant call to repentance, King David and his openness to God’s forgiveness, and of course Mary and Joseph whose obedience to God’s word sets a model for us all.

What a community we will be as we journey together!

May the Christ child be in our hearts this day and always, as we rejoice in his birth and walk in the light of his ways!

Fr. James Conlon
Pastor



We Look Forward to Seeing You at Sunday Mass!

Saturday 5:00 p.m.; **Sunday** 7:00, 8:30, & 10:30 a.m.,
12:30 and 5:00 p.m.

Join us in our Advent Journey in worship, prayer, service, and special events. Look for information on the events described in this Canticle issue and for announcements and upcoming events on our parish website at: **STFRANCISA2.COM**

Mark Your Calendar : Winter 2014-2015



December 1 & 15: **Taize Prayer Services** / 7PM/ church
 Now through December 14: **Giving Tree Gifts**. Help move gifts after weekend mass, call Scott Wright (821-2121)
 December 7 & 14: **High School Youth Group** this month/ 7PM /youth room / Jen Delvaux (821-2126)
 December 9: **Christmas Dinner Party for Foundations Preschool** (formerly Perry) of Ann Arbor/ 4 – 9PM /PAC/Scott Wright (821-2121)
 December 11 - **Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration**: Fajita Bar **Dinner & Mary of Nazareth Movie**, contact Marty Lucas (821-2125) or Ellen Ward (821-2132)
 December 12: **Mother & Child Network playgroup** 2nd & 4th Fridays at 10AM-noon/ nursery/ Tanya, 734-395-6651

December 14: Living Nativity Procession / 6:30 PM / church/ then Children's Christmas Festival / Ellen Ward ward@stfrancisa2.org (821-2132)

December 15: **Meditation Group** every Monday at 7-8 PM / chapel / Paul Thompson (734-646-5591)
 December 15: **Weekly Divorced/Separated Group** /7:00 – 8:30pm / School Library / Jeff 734-678-0995
 December 16: **Men's Group**/ 7:00 – 8:30pm / school library / Terry, 734-223-3589
 December 19: **M.O.M.S. Group** 1st & 3rd Fridays at 10AM-noon / chapel. Childcare too. Megan 734-646-9034
 December 24 to January 12: **ReGift BOX** / St. Francis Church main entrance / Scott Wright / 821-2121.

January 4: - **High School Youth Group** on most Sundays at 7PM /youth room / Jen Delvaux (821-2126)
 January 6 - **Theology on Tap**/ Young Adults /Arbor Brewing Co. / 7-9:00 pm/Jen (821-2126)
 January 8 - **High School** info. meeting for **Summer Service Trip & NCYC** / 7 pm/ school music rm/Jen 821-2126
 January 12: **Knitting - Shawl Ministry** monthly / 7PM church library / Kathleen (717-0685)
 January 15: **Small Group Facilitator Training** / 7 – 9:00pm/ POMR/ Janene, 821-2122
 January 18: **Monthly Women's Group** / *Women's Tea* /2:00 – 3:30 pm / in PAC/ Janene, 821-2122
 January 18: Celebrate & honor the life of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, at all weekend Masses / special Choir from our sister parish at 5PM Sun. Mass / Scott Wright 821-2121

January 24 - Sixth Parish Common Conference, details on stfrancisa2.com, or p.12, or Marty Lucas at 821-2125

January 25: **St. Francis School PreK-8 OPEN HOUSE and New Student Registration**, 1:30-4 PM stop in anytime. Mrs. Pritzel, principal (Office: 821-2200)
 January 30&31: **"Grieving with Great Hope" Bereavement Workshop** / Fri 7:00 – 9 pm in church and Sat 10:00 am – 4:30 pm in PAC / Janene 821-2122

February 7 - April 11: **Tax Assistance Program Saturdays** from 10:30AM to 12:30PM, Parish Office– by appointment only. Not Holy Sat, April 4. (Volunteer to prepare a tax return for a low income person / Julie Soyer /734-821-2121)
 February 7-8: **Girls' Retreat** for all high school girls/register with Jen (821-2126)
 February 8 & 15: **Lent Small Faith Sharing Groups begin** / Various days, times, locations / Janene Ternes 821-2122
 February 14: **St. Valentine's Coffee and Chocolate Tasting**/ 10am/ Jen (821-2126)
 February 17: **Senior Citizens' Mardi Gras Party**/ 10AM / PAC / Scott Wright / 821-2121.

February 18: Ash Wednesday Masses
7:00 am, 9:15 am, 7:00 pm

February 18: **Lent Fish Dinner** / 5:00-7:30PM / also on **Fridays**, February 20 thru March 27 / PAC
 February 28: St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School 14th Annual **Educational Trust Fund Benefit Evening**/ 6:00 PM / Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel / Colleen Pierce 734-821-2208 or cpierce@stfrancisa2.org

March 1: **Grocery-Food Drive** delivered to local **PANTRIES** / 10AM / School Gym / Scott Wright / 821-2121

New times!



Advent Communal Penance Service

Thursday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m. in church

CHRISTMAS 2014 MASSES

All Masses are in Church

Christmas Eve-Wednesday, December 24

4:00 p.m. (*Children's Liturgy*)



6:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m.

10:30 p.m. (*Caroling at 10 pm.*)

Also live-streamed at www.stfrancisa2.com

Christmas Day-Thursday, December 25

9:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m.

NEW YEAR MASSES

Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Wednesday, December 31 at 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 1 at 10:00 a.m.





Adult Faith Formation

Saint Francis – In the light of the garden statue

Franciscan spirituality is profoundly Christocentric due to Francis' intense devotion to Jesus. He understood fully how far God would go to reach out to every man, woman, and child to enter into relationship with them. The Crib, the Cross, and the Chalice are three key instances of this Divine inbreaking. The humility and poverty which God accepted in becoming incarnate struck Francis in a very personal way. Poverty and obedience are expressions of a loving relationship with Divine Love. Francis yearned to live as Christ had lived. From the helplessness of infancy, through the defenselessness of crucifixion, to the silence of the Eucharist, we too are called to live as Christ in the world.

During the month of October, we celebrated our parish patron with a variety of events. Mark Price returned to Ann Arbor to offer a dramatic portrayal of the life of Saint Francis. We had our traditional animal cookies for Coffee & Donut Hour from Benny's Bakery. Fr. Tom blessed the live pets and animals on the plaza in front of the Church. Our small groups read and discussed *Life Lessons From Saint Francis*—the books very generously discounted by the publisher. Each Monday, different guest speakers presented aspects of the life or works of Saint Francis. We closed our "Francis-fest" with Mass on October 31, at which Fr. James blessed and dedicated two new icons of St. Francis and St. Clare for use in our daily chapel.

School of Discipleship

Are you "in the dark" about your faith? Has your light grown dim? How can we show the light of Christ unless we are ourselves formed in the faith?

✦ Formation is more than education. Formation means, **I learn**, in accordance with the gospels, and **respond** in a way that changes my life.

This fall, we reopened the St. Francis School of Discipleship beginning with a 6-week course in Salvation History. Twenty-six people listened and learned under the tutelage of Jim Miller. "The class was illuminating and exciting!" "Jim is a dynamic speaker who is also very knowledgeable."

Watch for our Winter Course offering: Pray All Ways, coming in February. Our Associate Pastor, Fr. Tom, will teach us about prayer and spirituality and the benefits of a good prayer life.



So, What's Next????



Have you ever read the Acts of the Apostles? Acts gives us a close and intimate look into the lives of those first generation Christians, some of whom were eye-witnesses to Jesus' ministry. If they hadn't experienced and seen the physical Jesus for themselves, they most likely came to believe through the testimony of those who had known the earthly Jesus first hand and had witnessed his crucifixion and experienced the presence of the risen Lord. ✦

These first Christians and their response to the risen Christ is important for us to pay very close attention, for their witness can serve as a model and example for our own witness. Like them, we too worship the risen Lord. They may have been 20 centuries closer to the earthly Jesus with faith that was fresh and new. They burned with passion for their faith in a world that was hostile to this new movement. The more this new movement was persecuted by its enemies, the more it grew and expanded. The strength of the Church in any generation from then to now lies in a paying attention to the **foundations and the basics** of the faith and applying them in our day, our time, and our context.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and prayers..." In this verse we have perhaps one of the earliest descriptions of the characteristics of early Christian worship. It included an encounter with scripture, *"the apostles teaching,"* in the reading and preaching of the Word. We have the essence of worship which is *"koinonia,"* a word that means fellowship. And then there is the move toward the communion in the *"breaking of the bread and prayers."*

But notice! It didn't stop there. **"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."**

Notice how quickly, Luke, the author of Acts, moves from *worship to service*; from *worship to action*; from *word and koinonia to deed* from **worship to witness**. The first question that hits me right between the eyes is, do I move, do you move, do we move that quickly from worship to action; from centering on the Word and Sacrament in the context of *"koinonia"* to service and deed? Or when I (you) walk out that door after experiencing the *"word,"* the *"koinonia,"* and *"the breaking of the bread"* in communion, do I make a quick move to action, service and deed? Do I even think about it? Do you even think about it? Is it even on our minds? **Do we find ourselves energized for action?** ✦



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School Teeing It Up for Tuition Golf Outing



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School held its *Teeing It Up for Tuition* Golf Outing on Monday, September 22 at Travis Pointe Country Club. The event, chaired by (photo right) **Cokey Huffman** and **Trish Edwards**, raised over \$12,000 in gross proceeds. The net proceeds will help meet the need for tuition assistance for students currently enrolled in our parish school. Last year, \$45,463 was awarded to 15 families.



In addition to having eleven teams, the Outing received support from several sponsors, including:

Hole In One Sponsor
Gene Butman Ford

Hole Sponsors
Ed McClellan
Edward Jones

George Pomey
State Farm Insurance

Promanas Group
Commercial Real Estate Investment and Management
Santa Claus



We are sincerely grateful to these generous donors for their wonderful support!

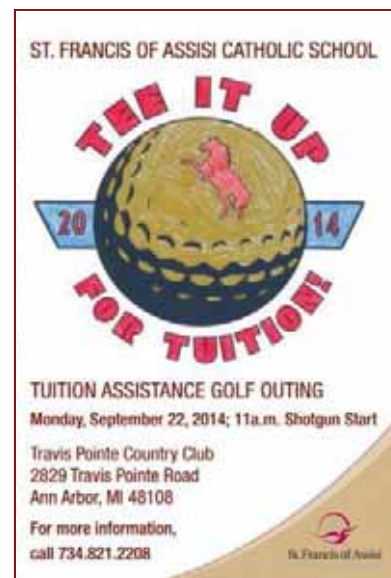


The Golf Outing also included a raffle with gifts donated by: Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, Gordon Food Service, Cokey Huffman, Lake Forest Golf Club, Lighthouse Car Wash, Luminosity Salon & Spa, Mancino's Pizza & Grinder, Mainstreet Ventures, Miles of Golf, Paesano Restaurant – Wine Bar, Colleen Pierce, Peter Savarino, Polo Fields Golf & Country Clubs, Trader Joe's, Turner's Garden Center, Travis Pointe, Washtenaw County Park's & Recreation and Zippy Auto Wash. Thank you to all of these special friends.

Many others contributed to the event with donations of goods and services. Thank you to Josh Birchler for the illustration (right), R.J. Conlin Marketing & Design for the brochure design, Busch's Fresh Food Market for the bottled water, and Cokey Huffman for the tee gifts. Donors to the Golf Outing included Ave Maria Mutual Funds, Patti Dobbs, Sam Edwards, Ron Eppler, Tim and Kathy Norton and Larry Peck. Golf day volunteers included Patti Dobbs, Kimmy Karibian, Nikki Kettlewell, Mary Karen McClellan, Linda Miller, Dick Miller, Renee Nettle, Laurie Ruselowski, Greg Ruselowski, Amy Smith, Sergio Scarcella and Rick Worcheck. They managed the logistics of the event seamlessly!

Proceeds from the *Teeing It Up for Tuition* Golf Outing will help us continue to provide currently enrolled families who have a financial need, the Catholic education they seek at our parish school. Thank you to everyone who supported this important event!

Colleen Pierce, Stewardship & Development Office
cpierce@stfrancisa2.org or 734-821-2208



We're goin' to Graceland

Are you a fan of soda fountains, poodle skirts, bobbie socks, slicked back hair and black leather jackets? If you are, then cuff your jeans and get out your favorite pair of saddle shoes and Jitterbug on over to the 14th Annual Educational Trust Fund (ETF) Benefit! This exciting and important St. Francis of Assisi Parish function is being held

on **Saturday, February 28, 2015 at the elegant Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel, beginning at 6:00 pm.** Our Benefit co-chairs are

Shawna Foster and Mary Karen McClellan. At the event, members of the St. Francis community will enjoy dinner, drinks, and many fun activities, in a Graceland theme, all the while supporting the tradition of academic excellence at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School.

Special events include:

- ◆ Silent auction
- ◆ Strolling dinner and open bar
- ◆ Charitable games
- ◆ Live auction with great one-of-a-kind treasures to bid on
- ◆ Live band with dancing

Who attends the Educational Trust Fund Benefit?

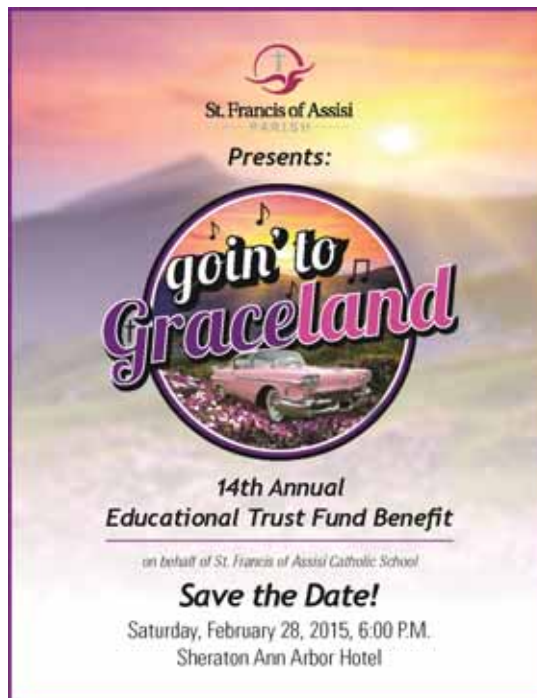
Everyone is invited to join us in Graceland!

- ◆ Past and present school parents
- ◆ Parishioners
- ◆ Friends and family members of parishioners and school families
- ◆ Current and past teachers and other faculty members of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School
- ◆ All who value a Catholic school and the outstanding education it provides

What is New at this year's Benefit?

In addition to the many new one-of-a-kind treasures that will be offered this year in both the silent and live auctions, the band – **Moose Wampler and the Overdays** - will be playing lots of great tunes, and event attendees will be able to rock and roll to some Graceland hits!

You'll also have the opportunity to become a home mixologist. Simply purchase a \$25 chance for our **Stock the Bar Raffle** and you might win an impressive collection of spirits! This party-worthy bar is perfect for entertaining. Everyone who is at least 21 years of age will have the opportunity to participate in the fun, even those individuals who do not attend the Benefit, since chances will be sold prior to the



event. The drawing will be held during the Benefit, and the winner need not be present to win.

What is the Educational Trust Fund (ETF)?

In 1987, St. Francis of Assisi Parish had the foresight to establish the Educational Trust Fund. The initial campaign raised nearly \$600,000 - today the Trust Fund balance exceeds \$1,835,000. The primary purpose of the ETF is to provide long-term financial assistance to our school. The ETF is organized to accomplish this purpose by pooling gifts of money and by investing this permanent fund to generate an income. Each year, five percent of the average of the last three years' beginning fund balance is disbursed to our school - the most recent distribution being \$70,000, the highest ever, for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Our primary ETF fundraising efforts which include the annual Benefit, the Leadership Circle, and Planned Giving, are intended to bring us closer to our long-term goal of a \$10,000,000 corpus, the income from which should go a long way toward ensuring a stable future for our parish school.

In addition to attending the event, what other opportunities are available to support the Educational Trust Fund?

- ◆ Sponsor the Benefit – an individual or business can sponsor the event at one of many levels, to help underwrite some of the costs.
- ◆ Make a donation.
- ◆ Become a member of the Leadership Circle by making a five-year commitment of at least \$1,000 per year to help ensure a steady income into the ETF corpus.
- ◆ Volunteer at the Benefit.

Please join us in helping to keep this Fund growing and ensuring the future success of our parish school and our children by attending and supporting the ETF Benefit! For general or reservation information on this special event, visit the website at <http://www.stfrancisa2.com/etf> or contact Colleen Pierce in the Development Office at cpierce@stfrancisa2.org or at 734-821-2208. The cost to attend is \$125 per person. The website will also have the most up-to-date list of our one-of-a-kind treasures for the auction.

We look forward to seeing you in Graceland on Saturday, February 28, 2015! Our school is blessed by such a wonderful, caring community. Please help us continue this tradition of caring by showing our school just how important it is to all of us!

From High School to Young Adults

High School Youth!!!

With winter creeping further in, it won't be long before teens start getting a bit of cabin fever. The High School Youth Ministry is gearing up with our winter schedule and even the informational meeting for our summer service trip. Yes, even though it is seemingly far away, we are thinking of summer!



First, we invite all the **young women** among our high school youth to a **special retreat – just for them!** **February 7-8** we will enjoy a weekend just for the girls at the De Sales Retreat Center in Brooklyn. We will have a variety of activities, discussions, presentations, Mass, and more. During free time we will enjoy the beautiful grounds (including a great hill for sledding) and other activities including cookie baking! For all our youth, we invite families to mark their calendars for the **spring retreat on April 17-19**. This retreat is open to any high school youth. This retreat will be at the Colombiere Center in Clarkston. Details will be posted later in the winter.

Our **summer service trip will be June 21-27**. This is an especially exciting and unique opportunity for our youth. During this week spent in **Baltimore** they will have **the chance to serve in traditional ways** at soup kitchens, shelters, retirement communities for religious, and centers for those with special needs. However, what makes this an exciting opportunity is that the teens will spend a day at **Catholic Relief Services** learning about the work they do to help our brothers and sisters around the globe. They will also learn how CRS advocates for policies on Capitol Hill. On Friday of this trip our **teens** will then head to Congress to lobby our Representatives and Senators on a policy issue related to Catholic Social Teaching. Interested? Come to Jan. 8 meeting. *We are also looking for additional chaperones—* if this is of interest, please contact Jen Delvaux in the parish office.

Information Meeting: January 8 at 7 pm Topics:

- ◆ Summer Service trip to Baltimore
- ◆ National Catholic Youth Conference in Indy.

Finally, at the January 8 meeting we will also have information available on the **National Catholic Youth Conference that is in November of 2015**. Sign up happens in January, so we ask that interested youth and parents attend the meeting. **NCYC is a gathering of 23,000 high school youth for three days in Indianapolis**. You can check out the videos and past conference highlights online (see links on our website).

We invite all high school youth to join our youth ministry. As always our doors are open on Sunday nights for Youth Group, the service Saturdays, and more – just check the website!

Young Adult Pilgrimage

In 2016 we will be taking a group to Krakow, Poland to join with an estimated 1-2 million other young Catholics for **World Youth Day**. This pilgrimage is a beautiful, unique, and challenging way to live your faith in a new way.

With nearly every country on Earth represented, WYD gives us a chance to experience the true universality of our Church. There are incredible opportunities to hear world-renowned speakers, musicians, and other artists. There are exhibits, performances, and prayer opportunities by the thousands. If that is not enticing enough, there is also the Pope.

Our pilgrimage will also offer the chance to experience and pray at several significant sites in the vicinity of Prague and throughout Poland. This is an opportunity of a lifetime!

Anyone who will be 18-35 in August of 2015 is invited to join us. Details are online or available from Jen Delvaux (jdelvaux@stfrancisa2.com or 821-2126)

St. John Paul's Theology of the Body: Sunday, January 11 (3-4 p.m.)

High School Youth and all Confirmation Candidates

In 1979, Pope John Paul II began a series of Wednesday audiences about the Catholic vision of the human person and love between spouses. 133 Wednesdays later, the Pope had completed a well developed but not quite yet understood philosophy on a sacramental view of all of life, especially relationships. 30 years later, the world has begun to revisit what is now considered a masterpiece where matter, creation, the body, everything in the universe is a metaphor for communicating something about God. Our relationships reflect the love of a personal God for us and not simply a legal view of rules. The theology of the body, matter and spirit, created and valued by God, is a beautiful Catholic vision of life.

We will be exploring this masterpiece, John Paul's *Theology of the Body*, especially for 8th grade and High School Youth. All Confirmation candidates, please set aside:

Sunday, January 11 in the Parish Activities Center (PAC). 2 p.m.—4:50 p.m. (all Confirmation Candidates). 3:00-4 p.m. High School youth are invited for this session of the talk

For more information, please contact Ellen Ward at, ward@stfrancisa2.org or 734-476-5640 (cell).

Living Nativity Procession



Sunday, December 14
Begins at 6:30 p.m. in church

The story of Christmas is the story of life, love, and the joy of knowing God. All families are invited to experience the story of the birth of Jesus Christ in the Living Nativity Procession.

Come Experience with Spirited Joy:

- ✦ The Story of the Birth of Jesus Christ
- ✦ Praise of Angels, Shepherds, Kings, and Sojourners
- ✦ Live Animals to Honor the Birth of the Christ Child.
- ✦ Resplendent Music to Glorify the Lord.
- ✦ The Peaceful Wonder of the Nativity.



In the Living Nativity Procession, we tell the story of Jesus' birth, in scripture, song, and scenes recreated with live animals. Children and adults participate in the roles of those present at the time of Christ's birth. The Living Nativity Procession begins in Church and proceeds outdoors through the various scenes that surround the Christmas story. After our short pilgrimage outdoors, we end up at the stable (again in church) to see the baby Jesus.

When the procession and story has concluded, all are invited to the Parish Activities Center (PAC) for the Children's Christmas Festival, a time of refreshments and games.



For more information, contact Ellen Ward at ward@stfrancisa2.org or 734-821-2132.

Every Child Deserves a Faith Education

✦ Religious Education Classes at St. Francis

St. Francis offers both traditional classes on Mondays and Wednesdays as well as family sessions on Sundays for children in grades preschool through 8th grade. Family Religious Education provides a setting where the parents actively participate in sharing the Faith with their children. Family Religious Education meets twice a month with repeat sessions so that every family can have the opportunity to help their children grow in the faith. Both the traditional classes and the Sunday family sessions include sacramental formation for first Eucharist and Confirmation. New this year, as an alternative to the traditional Confirmation classes, St. Francis offers a monthly Spirit Session, which features outside speakers sharing their Catholic faith on topics of their expertise and lived experience.



We welcome your involvement, suggestions, and advice as together we teach our children our Catholic Faith. Please feel free to contact Ellen Ward at ward@stfrancisa2.org with your comments and ideas as we build our program.

Please also remember that if you are still in need of enrolling your child in Religious Education classes, you may do so by filling out the registration form found on our website stfrancisa2.com (click on Religious Education), by stopping in the Parish or Religious Education Offices, or by calling 734-821-2130.



And There Was Light, Life, Service + Justice




Being pulled over by a Michigan state trooper caught me by surprise when after refueling at a gas station I had forgotten to turn on my headlights. The overhead lights were so bright at both at the gas station and on the ramp onto I-96, I did not think of needing them. After a lecture warning me of the dangers of my actions the officer released me to continue with my lights on. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured.

Similar to the need for headlights for driving, we all need to keep our spiritual lights on during the weekdays, in our homes, at work and at school. The light keeps us safe, and, assists us, and those we serve on the journey. During our life journey, each week we exit to the weekend for a time of spiritual refueling with friends and at Church. There at the table of the Lord our light of faith, hope and love is brightened.

Our life is to be a light of hope for all to see. We must intentionally remember to turn our light on. Jesus' birth illuminates our dark world. The Church magnifies his light. Christ's mission for us is to "wake up the world." Live in the light. Be light for all to see. Invite all to be baptized into Christ Jesus.


And, the Light of Christ burning in our hearts strengthens us to care for each other, the stranger and, especially the most vulnerable in our world, those with no headlights on.

Some in our community are experiencing a "New Pentecost", a revival in the life of the Holy Spirit, received especially at our Baptism and Confirmation. Do you recall the flames of the Spirit which descended from Heaven to rest upon the heads of those present? Once the light wakes us we are compelled to take  action. Here are some glimpses of the light burning in our community:



We experienced some special time with the Lord in prayer, devotions and we got to know each other better during our **Historic Church Tour in Toledo in October 2014**. We visited Saints Adalbert and Hedwig Parish, had Mass with Fr. Tom Wasilewski, enjoyed lunch at the Original Tony Packo's Café, then we stopped at Epiphany of the Lord- St. Stephen Church and St. Patrick Historic Church before returning to Ann Arbor. We've started planning our next trip - to Grand Rapids!



The Lord provides **shelter at IHN Alpha House** one week in October 2014. All together 52 people gave approximately 200 hours—shopping for provisions, supplying meals, guiding kids as they played, and just being at Alpha House as nighttime support. The residents said, "thank you". They thought the food was delicious, and they were so pleased by the great variety of meals. The moms especially were appreciative of the one-hour respite activity time with the kids. We also thank God for the significant leadership roll that, Vicki Hatch, contributes to this project for the St. Francis of Assisi Church Community. 



Our St. Francis Community will host the next Shelter in St. Francis Gym: March 2 – 9, 2015



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School

Advent at St. Francis Catholic School

Every Advent we have a special tradition in our parish school. On Monday mornings our K/1, 2/3, 4/5, and 6/8 hallways gather together in their respective hallways and light the Advent candle. A mini-prayer service follows and the students lead their peers in prayer and reflection during this special time. It is truly a beautiful experience. This year, I would like to share with you some of the resources that teachers use in the school that you can hopefully integrate in your home during Advent.



1. Light your Advent candle each evening with prayers from: <http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/adv-week.html> or <http://www.loyolapress.com/advent-prayer-for-children.htm>

2. Celebrate each day of Advent with an Advent Calendar. Pinterest has many creative and meaningful ways that children can create a calendar for the coming of Christ.

3. Adopt a family from our parish Giving Tree.

4. Serve in the name of Jesus, as a family, at local food pantries or soup kitchens.



5. Look to the St. Francis Parish opportunities to share with the children, that Christmas is more than receiving gifts but truly opening our hearts to Christ and others.

6. Celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas: <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/how-to-celebrate/> or <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/celebrate-at-home/>



The week before our students leave for Christmas break, students throughout the school celebrate Christmas around the World. All classrooms look to our great diversity in the school to share and celebrate our different family traditions. You can also look for ways to share this within your own families. A great resource is: <http://www.santas.net/aroundtheworld.htm>

As we open our hearts to Christ, take a few minutes to share this special time within your own families. I wish you all a blessed and peaceful Advent and Christmas season.

~Julie Fantone Pritzel
Principal, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School



Grandparents' & Special Friends' Day

On the morning of October 17th, the school community was buzzing with special visitors. The students loved sharing their school and classrooms with their grandparents and special friends. We look forward to many more years of this lovely tradition.



St. Francis of Assisi Jog-a-thon



This year St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School students participated in our 2nd annual Jog-A-Thon. Proceeds from the event are going to help purchase a new math curriculum for the 2015-2016 school year initiation. Not only does this event help raise money, but more



importantly it helps build school moral, leadership, and celebrate physical fitness.

SAVE THE DATE:



Sunday, January 25th

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic

SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

PreK—8 grades
Stop in any time



Questions, call 821-2200

Business Manager's Report to the Parish: November 2014



Since my last report to you one year ago, many new capital projects have been undertaken, which you have enabled by your increased giving to the Parish. Early in the spring of 2014, we purchased a dozen new Mity-Lite tables for the PAC, as well as 100 new brown folding chairs. We also contracted for upgraded air conditioning in the School and Religious Ed offices, and did some much needed repairs to the Parish Office, including masonry repair (tuckpointing) on the front wall and replacing a roof gutter and windows in the priests' offices. Later in the spring, tuckpointing was completed on the west wall of the PAC and in late June, on the Bell Tower.

Patching of damaged sections of the rear (upper) parking lots was also done in June, followed by sealcoating and re-striping of the lots in early August. Wooden doors on two emergency exits in the School were replaced in June by steel doors with windows and key access from the outside in case of an emergency. We also contracted for a second steam boiler for the K/3 building of our School, which was completely installed and tested by the end of September. This will give us some redundancy in heating that building; for the past five or six years, we have only had one steam boiler there, causing considerable worry every time a severe cold spell would occur. New safety glass was also installed in many classroom doors in the School in August, replacing ordinary glass that had the potential to injure someone in the case of an accident.

Visible to most parishioners is the renovation of the men's and women's restrooms on the lower level of the Church. Renovations included new fixtures, new counters and sinks, some new floor tile in the men's restroom, new foam soap and paper towel dispensers, and fresh new paint. A similar renovation was completed in the Parish Office restroom, where we said good-bye to the plastic (fake ceramic) wall tile and 60-year-old sinks.

Every year at this point in my report I talk about the projects still on a "to do" list. That list, while it still exists, is considerably shorter than in past years. Projects that we would still like to accomplish, should our finances continue to remain healthy, include, in no particular order, addition of a supplemental HVAC system for the Gym, renovating/upgrading school restrooms on the Middle School level, and replacing old windows in the Music and Art Rooms, Science Lab, and classroom 7A with modern energy-efficient windows with screens. We thank you for your continued support of the Parish and School which allows such improvements to occur. Please feel free to call or email me if you should have any questions or comments.

Dave Barera, Parish Business Manager
(734) 821-2111

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Catholic Stewardship and Direct Debit Raffle Prize!



Earlier this year, our faith-filled community renewed its commitment to Catholic stewardship – specifically, the stewardship of treasure. God calls each of us to receive His gifts gratefully, and to make a just offering as well. As Pope Francis once said in a homily*, on the duty of the Christian to help one another:

Help one another: this is what Jesus teaches us and this is what I am doing, and doing with all my heart, because it is my duty. As a priest and a bishop, I must be at your service. But it is a duty which comes from my heart: I love it. I love this and I love to do it because that is what the Lord has taught me to do. But you too, help one another: help one another always. One another. In this way, by helping one another, we will do some good.

When Father James talked with our congregation on October 18/19th about the stewardship of treasure, he encouraged everyone to consider supporting our parish via Direct Debit – an electronic payment of Sunday contributions. (This convenient option is available at no extra cost to parishioners.) You can find the Direct Debit form at <http://www.stfrancisa2.com/sign-up-forms> when you click on the **Sunday Offering Direct Debit** link.

Father also offered an incentive – **everyone who signs up for Direct Debit for the first time, or increases their existing Direct Debit contribution, between October 18 and December 31, 2014, will be entered in a drawing to receive two complimentary reservations, valued at \$250, to the 14th annual Educational Trust Fund Benefit on Saturday, February 28, 2015 (details on p.5). One lucky winner will be drawn in January 2015.**

Let us all bring glory to God by joyfully sharing our blessings!

* http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_coena-domini_en.html





St. Francis Parish Events for All



Picnic Around The World A Community of Diversity

Did you know that St. Francis is made up of people from more than 49 countries? Nearly 700 parishioners and friends from a variety of these countries gathered for an outdoor Mass and picnic on the Sunday after Labor Day, making this big world we live in, and big parish we worship in, just a little bit smaller. We shared food at the picnic and Eucharist at the Mass, truly becoming the body of Christ.



SAVE THE DATE --- January 30 & 31, Friday evening & Saturday

Grieving with Great HOPE is a weekend grief support workshop that offers a prayerful, practical and personal approach for anyone who is mourning the loss of a loved one. If you have lost a spouse, a child (including pregnancy loss), a grandchild, a parent, another family member or a friend, you are encouraged to attend.

Presenters will include Fr. Tom Wasilewski as well as John and Sandy O'Shaughnessy from Good Mourning Ministry, a local Catholic bereavement apostolate. For more information contact Janene Ternes at 734-821-2122, jlternes@stfrancisa2.org or visit www.goodmourningministry.net.



The darkness of winter and the stress of the holidays can often lead to increased feelings of grief as we face special gatherings without our loved ones. But we are not alone. We have our community at St. Francis to journey with us and our Catholic faith to comfort us. If you grieving the loss of spouse, a child (including pregnancy loss), a grandchild, a parent, sibling or another family member or a friend, please plan to join us for this time of support and hope based on our Catholic faith.



Grateful Women

The Women's Faith and Fellowship group brings together women in all stages of life, from young adults to seniors and everything in between, for prayer, study, support and fellowship. We share our faith journey and a whole lot more! Fun and food are abundant at every gathering. And we always have a faith-based speaker or event. Mark your calendar for **Sunday afternoon, January 18** for our annual **Women's Tea**. In addition to a relaxing time with incredible desserts, our speaker will talk about gratitude – *Where does it fit in our faith? What does it do for us? How do we get more of it?* You won't want to miss it!!! For details, contact Janene Ternes at jlternes@stfrancisa2.org or 734-821-2144.





St. Francis of Assisi
PARISH

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Our 6th Parish COMMON CONFERENCE:


**“From Worship to Witness”
is coming Saturday, January 24!**



*This daylong event will feature **Deacon Ralph Poyo** as our keynote speaker. There will be 24, yes! **24 different workshops** from which you can select to connect, reconnect, learn, or go deeper into some aspect of our Catholic faith.*

One theologian said it this way: *"The persistent danger of our worship, the sacrilege against which we must be eternally vigilant, is **the tendency to divorce Sunday worship from daily life**. It is the danger that all our anthems and songs, our praise and prayers, our poetic preachers and warm fellowship might somehow conspire to turn worship into an event that has nothing to do with everyday life. **Unless there is some link between our worship of God and junior's spilled cereal at breakfast, the boring routine at the office, the monthly collection of bills, the cancer that will not heal, the conflicts we encounter then our worship is not only irrelevant to human need, but also unfaithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.**"*

While we would love to see you attend the whole conference, it is set up so you can come for one or two workshops, or spend the day. The full brochure with all the offerings will be available later in December. You may register online at that time, or via hardcopy form in the Sunday bulletin. **There is NO CHARGE to attend this event!!!!**

 I pray, that like those first believers, we will leave this place with such glad and generous hearts that we will offer ourselves and our gifts to the glory of God.

~Marty Lucas (mlucas@stfrancisa2.org or 821-2125)