

Fall
2013



Holy Spirit Community Newsletter

Welcome Back!

I hope you've had a wonderful summer. Summer is a time for renewal, refreshment and reinvigoration; a time to put aside regular routines and relax a little. Things will change. September nears, and familiar patterns fall back into place.

One of the wonderful things about fall is the start of a new theme for LIFT, our parish's faith sharing program...and, beginning in September with LIFT Gathering 1, you can exercise your faith by *cycling through the liturgical year*. For the next 10 months, focus is on learning more about our liturgical seasons and answering questions such as "why do we celebrate this way?" and "how did this come to be?"

I'm sure you know about Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. And you have favorite seasons and holy days. Think how you can share what you know and cherish about being Catholic and how we celebrate faith with a neighbor or children who haven't had the experiences you've enjoyed. By participating in LIFT Gatherings and additional faith sharing activities, you can learn more about seasons and celebrations, as well as the ways and traditions of other feast days that will deepen your appreciation of your faith.

We've improved LIFT this year by committing to more age-appropriate groups at our gatherings and giving meals a more community feel by introducing all new menus. (Please see page 3 for LIFT information.)

Some wonderful things are going on at LIFT this year! Let me personally invite your family and you to join with your neighbors to exercise your faith and grow closer to God. Please read the green LIFT brochure that was mailed with this newsletter: learn about dates, registration and see how you can personally participate (share your time and talent) in our LIFT gatherings.

Blessing for a new year!

Fr. Joe O'Brien

Master Plan: Campus Updates Discussed

More than 50 people joined Holy Spirit's Facilities Planning Committee members and architect on June 8 to learn about possibilities to update our campus—the church, parish house and school—in order to meet our growing spiritual, pastoral and educational needs. At the meeting, Paul Mays, architect with the firm of Butler Rowland Mays Architects, LLP, based in Ballston Spa, presented slides and information on the future possibilities for our campus, and a survey offered to each participant sought feedback about details presented. The committee has reviewed the survey feedback and appreciates the thoughtful, insightful and supportive comments. The feedback will help the Committee in its planning.

Throughout the summer, architect Paul Mays and committee members further examined the possibilities to meet community needs, and Phase III of the Master Plan, which presented the development of program accommodation alternatives, will be submitted to the diocese by the end of August. This fall, there will be a consensus seeking phase to the process, at which time all members of the parish and school will be invited to share their comments. Watch the parish and school Web sites and parish *Bulletin* for details!

If you missed the June 8 meeting, or if you attended the meeting and would like more detailed information, you may review the reports in the Parish Office during office hours, M-F 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Please call 477-7925 to schedule a time to stop by. You may also contact one of the Facilities Planning Committee members: Fr. Joe O'Brien at frjoe@holyspiritchurcheg.org; Kevin Haggerty, co-chair, at khaggerty@flexelectric.com; Bob Picco, co-chair, at mpicco@gmail.com; Rob Feldman at rfeldma1@nycap.rr.com; Jim Graham at jgraham@synthesisllp.com; Mary Beth Hofmeister at hofs3@earthlink.net; Mike Piatek at mpiatek@hsseg.com; Kathy Rosenbaum at kathy@holyspiritchurcheg.org; and, Meaghan Rossbach at meaghanlm@gmail.com. (If you do not have access to email, please call Fr. Joe O'Brien or Kathy Rosenbaum in the parish office and arrangements will be made to contact any member.)—*Kathy Rosenbaum*

Liturgy of the Word Familiarizes Children with the Word of God



Throughout this past year a dozen or more children participated in Liturgy of the Word with Children each week during our 11 a.m. Mass. Led by just a handful of teens and adults, more than 50 children have benefited from this ministry and have begun to experience Scripture more deeply, enabling them to participate in Mass more fully. New adults and teens are needed to assist with this ministry. Could you be the one to step forward to help?

All children are welcome, but this ministry aims to attract those aged 4-8. Know a child who would like to join us? Bring him or her along to become more familiar with the Word, our first way to encounter Christ—in story. Children learn about the Bible, interact with the Sunday Gospel reading, practice the responses of the Mass, and pray for loved ones before returning to Mass to sing and pray with the whole church body. (Is your child one of the 50 who has enjoyed this ministry? Share with us what you think your child has gained in the past year! We want to hear from you.)

Can't make it to the 11a.m. Mass? Check out the Children's Ministry section of the *Bulletin* for prompts, questions and activities to help your family interact with the Sunday Gospel reading! (Let us know if you find them helpful!)

Looking for a way to stay better connected with the parish community and opportunities for your family to share faith? Check out our blog: go to <http://100marshmalows.blogspot.com/>.

Does your child feel he or she is getting "too old" for Liturgy of the Word with Children? Perhaps he or she would consider becoming an altar server or member of the children's choir? Contact the parish for more information.—*Maria Collins*

Social Action Ministry: Helping Those in Need for 20 Years

The Holy Spirit Church Social Action Ministry is now celebrating its 20th year. Created to help the needy in Southern Rensselaer County, the Social Action Ministry places special emphasis on assisting the poor, hungry, sick, homeless and elderly, said Rocco Acquilano, founding chairperson who is still active in the ministry.

According to Acquilano, the ministry works directly with existing service organizations—such as CoNSERNS-U, Circles of Mercy, Joseph House, Catholic Charities and the Community Loan Fund of the Capital District—providing assistance directly to the ministry’s target populations. Programs offered operate on two service levels, added Acquilano. The first entails charitable acts dealing with the need for food, clothing, personal hygiene care and shelter. The second is social justice, in which

the ministry serves an advocacy and activist role to address the root causes of need, or directs people to existing services.

On the charity level, the ministry holds drives for donations such as Back to School and Sundays for Undies for CoNSERNS-U, Pillow and Blanket Drive for Joseph House, a baby shower for Circles of Mercy and a personal care items drive for all of these organizations. In addition, said Acquilano, the ministry has sponsored a Burmese family since 2010. “They are now mostly independent, and the children are doing well in school,” he noted.

The ministry also works with Holy Spirit’s Youth Ministry at St. Catherine’s Center for Children, where parishioners join with others to renovate Copson House, which houses up to 25 children aged 5-13 who need a safe home.

For social justice, the ministry holds Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate sales and Work of Human Hands sales—helping Third World farmers and artisans receive a fair wage for their labors. The ministry also annually attends legislative meetings with Youth Ministry members as part of the NYS Catholic Conference. In addition, the parish supports the Community Loan Fund of the Capital District, which provides loans to small businesses and nonprofit organizations. “This is economic development from the ground up,” Acquilano said.

“We’re all about serving the needy,” said Acquilano. “We find out where the need is and we address it. We gauge our work on need in all aspects of life. That’s the beauty of it.”

According to current co-chair and long-term ministry member Marilyn Fortin, the ministry is based on John’s message: “whatever you do

to the least of my brethren that you do unto me.”

“The Social Action Ministry is very rewarding,” added Kathy Wiech, current ministry co-chair and secretary.

“When we started some 20 years ago, we agreed not to recreate the wheel,” Acquilano stated, adding that each original member brought skills and experiences that created the ministry’s diverse and far-reaching programs offered today. “We said we could do more and serve more people by working with the umbrella organizations like CoNSERNS-U, Joseph House and Circles of Mercy—and that’s why we’ve been so successful...(Our work) is quite involved. We’re very proud of the things we do.”

According to Wiech, the Social Action Ministry now comprises nine active members. Both Acquilano and Wiech noted that the ministry relies on members plus service volunteers throughout the year to successfully complete its programs. Some programs, they said, require more helping hands than others.

All three said the ministry needs new people to help. “If someone hasn’t the time to commit to the ministry, he or she can volunteer for a specific program or drive,” noted Acquilano. “You get more from giving. I am very hands on and help out wherever possible, especially the drives.”

“If you’re looking for a way to live your faith in a way that is very satisfying, join our ministry,” stated Fortin.

The ministry meets bimonthly, with programs running throughout the year. At the Sept. 30 meeting, to be held at 7 p.m. in the school library, Joseph House’s Paul Dello will discuss his organization’s work to help Troy’s needy. According to Wiech, all are welcome to attend.

Social Action Calendar

Ongoing: food pantry drop off of weekly donations; Circles of Mercy closet donations and classes/mentoring; personal care items for Joseph House; and, the Capital District Community Loan Fund

Summer	<p>Back to School Drive/Sundays for Undies for CoNSERNS-U</p> <p>Back to School Supplies and Clothes shopping with children</p>
Fall	<p>Joseph House Pillow and Blanket Drive</p> <p>Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate Sale</p> <p>Coats for Kids</p> <p>Christmas Store</p> <p>Christmas Gift Tree</p> <p>Joseph House Walk to support victims of domestic violence</p>
Winter	<p>NYS Catholic Conference attendance with legislative meetings</p> <p>Personal Care Drive for CoNSERNS-U</p> <p>Circles of Mercy and Joseph House</p>
Spring	<p>Circles of Mercy Baby Shower</p> <p>Stewardship Day</p>

2013-14 LIFT: Cycling Through The Liturgical Year

The 2013-14 LIFT program is about exercising faith. Attend the LIFT Gatherings and learn about the seasons and feasts that occur during the Liturgical Year. **All are welcome.** We meet Monday, Wednesday and Sunday, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with a meal in the Holy Spirit School gym.

Gathering 1-Sept. 9, 11, 15
An Extra-ordinary Time
(Explore the seasons of the liturgical year, St. Francis and Angels);

Gathering 2-Oct. 14, 16, 20
In the Community of the
Communion of Saints
(The Feast of All Saints and All Souls);

Gathering 3-Nov. 18, 20, 24
O Come All Ye Faithful
(Advent and Christmas);

Gathering 4-Jan. 6, 8, 12
Blinded by the Light
(Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul; the Early Church);

Gathering 5-Feb. 3, 5, 9
We Pray, We Fast, We Serve
(The Season of Lent);

Gathering 6-March 10, 12, 16
The Alpha and the Omega:
the Beginning and the End
(The Annunciation and Holy Week);

Gathering 7-April 21, 23, 27
Earth, Wind and Fire
(Easter and Pentecost);

Gathering 8-May 31
Stewardship Day



Exercise Your Faith!

We are excited to announce the 2013-14 faith formation schedule. The LIFT team works hard to provide a solid, informative and fun curriculum for parishioners of **all** ages. We've also changed our dinner menus!

LIFT 2013-14—Cycling through the Liturgical Year

Faith is lifelong. The road of life gets bumpy. Weariness sets in when life seems to force you to pedal uphill. Faith can support you through rough times and help you appreciate life when you're coasting downhill! Come! Discover how our church marks life's hills and valleys and learn about the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year.

At LIFT Gatherings, our faith will form and grow by examining the feasts and seasons of our liturgical cycle. Sessions are for **everyone**—children, teens, college students, moms and dads, singles, seniors, empty nesters, newcomers, couples, those who are widowed and those who are divorced. Come alone, with a friend, with your children, or as a family.

This year's LIFT topics include:

- **Gathering 1**-An Extra-ordinary Time (Explore the seasons of the liturgical year, St. Francis and Angels);
- **Gathering 2**-In the Community of the Communion of Saints (The Feast of All Saints and All Souls);
- **Gathering 3**-O Come All Ye Faithful (Advent and Christmas);
- **Gathering 4**-Blinded by the Light (Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul; the Early Church);
- **Gathering 5**-We Pray, We Fast, We Serve (The Season of Lent);
- **Gathering 6**-The Alpha and the Omega: the Beginning and the End (The Annunciation and Holy Week);
- **Gathering 7**-Earth, Wind and Fire" (Easter and Pentecost); and,
- **Gathering 8**-Stewardship Day.

(Clip out and post the adjacent LIFT schedule as a reminder of the year.)

All are welcome. (We really mean it!)

Registration is important. Each gathering begins with a meal at 5:30 p.m. in the school gym. When you arrive, please sign in on the attendance sheet at the table where you choose to sit. Everyone is welcome to attend more than one gathering per month! Identical presentations are offered Monday, Wednesday and Sunday to enable all to attend. (Sometimes family members cannot attend together. People who help serve the meal or facilitate a session return as a participant.) At the end of the gathering, materials are provided for participants to read at home and discuss throughout the month. A two-three minute program evaluation survey is emailed, and provides valuable input. We ask you to help when you can. (A list of areas where help is needed is located on the back side of the registration form.)

An annual fee helps offset gathering costs—one adult: \$15; two adults: \$25; adult(s) with one child: \$65; adults(s) with two children: \$75; adult(s) with three or more children: \$90. If you are unable to pay this fee, please speak with Fr. Joe O'Brien or a LIFT team member; we want to help you find a way to come. Although it is ideal that all family members attend the same night, we recognize this is not always possible. We understand, and we hope to reach as many family members as possible. Please consider attending different nights.

More information about LIFT is on our Web site at www.holyspiritchurcheg.org

You may register online and mail the fee to the Parish Office.

Feeding ALL our hungers!

LIFT feeds our spiritual/faith hunger. At our LIFT Gatherings, we begin with dinner to feed our physical hunger and foster fellowship with family, friends and neighbors. We listened to your comments regarding menu options at previous LIFT Gatherings. Beginning in September, we will offer new and exciting menu options at our gatherings. For the September gatherings, we are "raising the bar" with a baked potato bar complete with a variety of toppings, and, for dessert, we will have a sundae bar. Other meals throughout the LIFT year will include taco salad, pasta chicken, Caesar salad, turkey dinner, soup supper, breakfast for dinner, pasta primavera and a potluck dinner. If you or any family member has food allergies or special dietary requirements, please contact us so we can make accommodations.

We are always seeking help with set up, serving and clean up. If interested in helping, please contact the LIFT team at the Parish Office at 477-7925.—*Kathy Rosenbaum*

Mailed with this newsletter is a brochure on Holy Spirit's 2013-14 LIFT Gatherings with registration form. Online registration is also available at www.holyspiritchurcheg.org.

Sing a New Song Unto the Lord!

Does your child attend 2nd-8th grade and like to sing? Can he or she commit an hour a week a few months per year? If yes, join the children's choir! To learn more, please join us for an interest meeting on Oct. 10 at 6 p.m. in the church. Contact Cylon George at 477-7925 or cylon@holyspiritchurcheg.org to sign up or for more information.

RCIA Offers Exploration

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a new and old church rite, as the Second Vatican Council re-established this ancient rite primarily for non-Catholics to explore whether the church is right for them. RCIA entrants may be: baptized in another Christian tradition; nonbaptized; or, baptized Catholics who never received First Eucharist or Confirmation. RCIA entails weekly group discussions focused on Sunday scripture readings and how they touch participants. Information about Catholic life and church teachings is also provided. Questions about RCIA can be directed to Deacon Bill Dringus at deacon1275@aol.com or 477-4803.

Holy Spirit's 90th Anniversary

On Nov. 16-17, Holy Spirit Church will commemorate its 90th anniversary. Our 90th Anniversary Committee, chaired by Karen LaFrank, is planning a heritage dinner after Saturday's 4 p.m. Mass and brunches after Sunday's 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses. Bishop Howard Hubbard will preside at the 11 a.m. Sunday Mass.

At Saturday's dinner, the church will provide turkey and parishioners are asked to provide a special family dish or a dish that reflects the diverse ethnic heritage of our parish. More details will follow in the weeks to come. Please mark your calendars and plan to join the celebration.—*Fr. Joe O'Brien*

School News: Year Filled with Promise, Framed by Faith



Holy Spirit School

The start of the 2013-14 school year is here! This new school year is certainly filled with promise, excitement and scholarly advancement. As always, our educational program is framed by our faith.

A balanced budget for 2013-14 was recently accepted by our Board of Education. In realization of the economic conditions we all face, tuition for 2013-14 in grades K-8 remains at the 2012-13 rates. The board also approved a reorganization of programs offered by Holy Spirit School that will allow a more efficient and effective delivery of programs. In addition, the following teachers have been hired for the 2013-14 school year: Mrs. Monica Parmenter (F/T) Library/Technology; Ms. Alison Occhiogrosso (F/T) Pre-K -8 Spanish; Mrs. Ann-Marie LoGuidice (F/T) Grade Three; and, Mr. Michael Forand (F/T) Middle School Math. We welcome our new teachers and know that they will be a great addition to our family.

During the 2012-13 school year, funding from our PSA and the Hannaford Gift Card Program enabled significant improvements to our Technology Program, such as: 20 iPads with a charging station; three smart boards; white boards replaced black boards in the Middle School; three computers for the lab; and, various printers and scanners. During the 2013-14 school year, we plan to purchase additional iPads, smart boards and laptops for student use in our classrooms. We continue to upgrade our network as the use of technology in our educational program is very important.

Our Web site (hsseg.com) was revamped with new information constantly being added.

Enrollment for 2013-14 is up approximately 2 percent. Please contact us at 477-5739 or hssoffice@hsseg.com for further information and/or to register. School tours are available at any time.

For more than 50 years, Holy Spirit School provided an excellent educational program, a faith-filled environment and service to our community. We continue this legacy.—*Michael Piatek*

Upcoming Events

9/9, 11, 15: LIFT Gathering 1, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Holy Spirit School

9/22: Parish Picnic, Mass at 11 a.m., picnic follows, East Greenbush Town Park (Please bring a side dish to share)

9/29: Confirmation Candidate/Sponsor Retreat, Mass at 11 a.m., Retreat on the Rituals 12 p.m.-4 p.m., Holy Spirit School

10/14: Service Mission: Sandwich Making for the Capital City Rescue Mission, 10 a.m., Holy Spirit School

Please see the enclosed brochure for a full schedule of 2013-14 LIFT Gatherings.

Serving Community, Others through Stewardship Day

During 2013's Stewardship Day, approximately 150 people throughout the parish joined together to live their baptismal pledge to serve and better the community and help one another. A natural extension of the Holy Spirit Church's parish and Youth Ministry's volunteer work, the 2013 Stewardship Day included a range of services and activity, including: preparing and delivering 276 bagged lunches to Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless and Rescue Mission, with several parishioners serving lunch at the Rescue Mission; preparing and serving lunch to children at St. Catherine's Copson House; donating and delivering many carloads of clothing to Blessingdales, a Rescue Mission ministry; preparing and delivering 30 birthday bags to CoNSERNS-U; performing maintenance chores at Copson House, such as cleaning the front yard, planting flowers and painting the first floor hallway; hosting a Circles of Mercy baby shower; walking in the Freihofer Community Walk to benefit Circles of Mercy; baking treats for families at Ronald McDonald House; and, collecting musical instruments for injured soldiers and veterans as part of Operation Music Aid. While stewardship opportunities are offered for Stewardship Day attendees, parishioners may also perform their own service missions.

Stewardship Day, now in its second year, opened with a Prayer of Sending at Holy Spirit Church and closed with Mass followed by a potluck dinner served in the school gym.—*Tracey Penk-Masucci*