

St. Paul Parish Newsletter

December 2011



Rev. Fr. Mark J. Niznik - Pastor
Masses: Saturdays 4pm & Sundays 10am
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Note from Father Mark:

Our recent Back Pack Program Efforts have been truly blessed by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and with the generosity of our church family and local community, we raised over \$4,000 and collected over 7,000 personal care items (valued at approximately \$15,000) during our REMAX PREMIER REALTY Back Pack Scramble Charity Golf Tournament. There are so many wonderful volunteers who stepped up to help and there were many great prizes distributed that evening. The decorations and memorial T-Box area honoring our veterans were so special and kept a truly Christian-American spirit within our hearts. We work toward keeping ourselves humble in these matters, not seeking earthly rewards and acknowledgments, but knowing and understanding that the Lord our God knows our faith and our works on behalf of the most vulnerable of His children. They are the ones we keep the focus on, because it is they who are suffering in the shadows of our lives. They are the ones we will never meet and they are our mission. Being a homeless child is something that I can't even fathom as I grew up in a well secured environment. They are my neighbors, literally in the description that Jesus has burned into my mind. Our love is for all our neighbors and we choose this path in support of homeless children nearby, to continue building the kingdom of heaven upon it. May the Lord bless you for any support you have given to this cause or any other cause in His name and may we all relish in the sense of purpose and opportunity that the Lord has set forth for us.

Our next Back Pack Scramble will be held on May 4, 2012. Details are on the flyers in the social hall. You won't want to miss the amazing prize opportunities at this tournament. Contact Susan Hilt ASAP for your reservation: 352-307-2129. If you prefer to email me with a reservation, please do so, but make sure you follow up with me as my email activity is perpetually extremely high volume. Email me at fathermark1@gmail.com. Please do not contact or inquire with my sister Debbie as she is not involved with any of the scheduling for the golf tournaments. Please either contact me or Susan Hilt with any questions you may have. This next tournament is going to be beyond incredible!!!! Check out the flyer!!!

Pancake Breakfast



On December 17th, tickets will go on sale for the Young Men's Society of Resurrection (YMS of R) pancake breakfast, scheduled for Sunday, January 8, 2011 at the social hall after the 10:00am Mass. Included in the breakfast are eggs, sausage, orange juice, coffee and who knows what else we have in store! The donation for this event is \$7 and proceeds benefit the work the YMS of R does. Tickets must be purchased in advance to ensure proper food ordering. Following the breakfast, a 50/50 Bingo will be held to continue all the fun!!! Anyone willing to volunteer, please contact either Bob or Dori Canfield who are co-chairing this awesome event!!!

BOB: 352-216-5470 or bobcanfieldus@gmail.com DORI: 352-233-9961 or doricandfield@gmail.com



Christmas Masses

On Christmas Eve,
(Saturday, Dec. 24th)
there will be only one
Mass at 7:00pm.

On Christmas Day,
(Sunday, Dec. 25th)
Mass will be at 10:00am.

Communion Class

First Holy Communion Classes are now being held in the social hall following the 10:00am Mass. Students not yet baptized are welcome to begin attending as they will undergo instruction and preparation for baptism as well.



YMS of R Men's Group

The next YMS of R meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7th at 9:00am in our social hall. All men from the parish are encouraged to attend. (Breakfast to be determined)



St. Paul Choir

We have a fantastic, spirited choir here at St. Paul's, under the direction of Charley Stoykovich. Anyone interested in joining the choir can meet here at the church on Tuesdays at 6:00pm for practice.



Ladies Adoration Society

At this holy and joyful time I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you our church family for your never ending support for our fundraising efforts. It is through these efforts that we are able to maintain and keep our altar in elegant and pristine condition to honor our Lord Jesus. With your continued support we will be able to accomplish great things.



Our November "Silent Auction" was a resounding success. It far exceeded our expectations and we thank our Lord Jesus for his great blessings on our Society. Congratulations to all the winners!



"Christmas Cookie Trays" raffle tickets will go on sale Saturday, November 26th, after the 4:00pm Mass and on Sunday, November 27th, after the 10:00am Mass. Tickets will be \$2.00 each, 3 for \$5.00 or 10 for \$10.00 for your chance win a large tray of assorted cookie favorites baked by the Ladies of our Adoration Society. I promise you all will have many chances to win these fresh baked favorites to serve or give as gifts for Christmas. Father Mark will draw the many winning tickets and announce the winners on Saturday, December 17th.

On behalf of myself and our Adoration Society Sisters, we wish you God's choicest



this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

In His Service,

Dori Canfield, ANS President



Our ANS Christmas Luncheon will be Saturday, December 3rd at 11:30am at the Nancy Lopez Legacy Restaurant, located in The Villages. All ladies of the Parish are welcome.



We welcome our new members of our church family who have joined in the month of October.

October:

Diane Booth



Father Mark is conducting bible class on Thursdays, 10:00am at Church On The Square in The Villages. This ongoing class is for everyone interested in finding out more about their faith. Father Mark brings us many pearls of Scripture each week and whether you are a first time bible reader or an astute learned scriptural connoisseur, there's something special in the Word of God for everyone. You are encouraged to bring a friend.

Backpack Program



This is another of our school support programs that we are helping out with. Teachers distribute care packages to families in need. **Sample size** personal care products are most appropriate. There are plastic bins in the back of the church to drop off these supplies.



Birthdays

2nd Debbie Collier
5th Judy Mierzwiak
6th Norma Pais
7th Toby Riedel
13th Debbie Niznik
14th Rene Gadbois
18th Walt Emmerson
19th Lydia Kowalski Cane
20th Andy Pallotto
27th Judy Pereyo
 Delores Reagan
28th Paul Lonsdorf
30th Neil Keegstra
31st Rose Daniells
 Kathy Lazenby
 Ron Mierzwiak

Offering Envelopes for 2012 will be available in the social hall at the end of December.



Anniversaries

3rd Neil & Loretta Keegstra
12th Roman & Zdzislawa Stopa
17th Matthew & Mary MacMillan
21st Al & Ellie Nemeth
28th Ben & Dorothy Boogaard
 Gene & Kathryn DalPino
29th Walt & Debbie Emmerson
31st Richard & Sally Klenoski
 Vern & Gail Shukoski

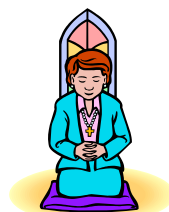
* Members, if your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please inform Debbie Niznik.

Annual Meeting



Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 5, 2012. This is the date of our annual meeting. It will be in the social hall following the 10:00am Mass. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

Womens Prayer Group



The Ladies Prayer Group will meet on Wednesday, December 7th and 21st.

Rosary at 3:00pm

Prayer Group at 3:30pm.

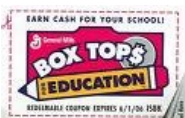
All the ladies of the parish are welcome.

Golf League

Our golf league now meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Spruce Creek Del Webb in Summerfield. Golfers are paired into groups of 4 players in scramble format. If any men or women are interested in joining our league, please contact Clyde Caiazza at (352) 245-8692



Boxtops & Labels for Education



We are continuing to collect boxtops & labels for education. In the back of the church there is a plastic bin for you to drop off your boxtops & labels. There are extra copies of the products list on the information table in the social hall if you need a copy.

These students come from very low incomes or homeless households. Each student is asked to request a gift for the holiday season. The students' wishes are then placed on a tree for an eager person to sponsor their request. Once again, St. Paul will be fulfilling the wishes of Marion Oaks Elementary School located in the heart of Marin Oaks. What makes MOES unique is the fact that 1/10 of our population serves as a part of Marion County's students with severe physical, social, and mental needs.

Just choose an "Angel" from the tree in our social hall. Purchase one of the student's request (unwrapped or wrapped) and return it to the church by Sunday, December 11th.

Words for Thought

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6 NIV

Special Offering Envelopes



For December, there is an envelope entitled: *Christmas Decorations*. This is used for the poinsettias and other decorations for the Christmas Season.

The month of December is designated for the *Seminary Fund*. Parish members can donate to this fund by using their Seminary Fund envelope. Also, if you are not a member and would like to donate to this fund, please use a Love Offering envelope found in the church pews and mark it "*Seminary Fund*". This fund is used to help promote vocations and assist seminarians in their formation to the diaconate and priesthood. Thank you for your considerations.



Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is filled with student requests for gifts for the holiday season. The students are chosen by their classroom teachers based upon student data/need.

The Advent Season in the Church



Advent marks the start of the Christmas season and the new year in the Church. It begins on the Sunday nearest November 30th, the feast day of St. Andrew the Apostle, and lasts four Sundays. The date it begins changes from year to year. As a result, so does the length of each Advent season. This year the first Sunday in Advent is November 27, 2011.

The word *advent*, from Latin, means “the coming.” It is a time of spiritual reflection. We look to experience penitential as well as cheerful anticipation.

An Advent wreath is made from green to symbolize continuous life and contains four candles -- three purple and one rose. Often a fifth candle (white) is added to the center of the wreath for lighting on Christmas Eve, in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

The progressive weekly lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord’s first coming in to the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

One purple candle is lit to symbolize Hope.

Second Sunday: Peace

Two purple candles are lit - Hope & Peace

Third Sunday (Gaudete Sunday): Joy

Two purple candles (Hope & Peace) and one rose is lit to symbolize Joy.

Fourth Sunday: Love

All four candles are lit - Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Christmas Eve:

We light all four candles and add the fifth white candle which represents the light of Christ.

Polish Christmas

The first sign of coming holidays in Poland is St. Nicholas Day. On this day, one person was selected to represent St. Nicholas and was driven on a sleigh to the homes in a Polish village. He was dressed in a long white robe, bishop's mirth, long white beard and held a shepherd's staff. Children who were good during the year received gingerbread cookies (pierniki), apples, and small toys. Children who were bad, received twigs as a punishment. Children and adults alike still exchange small gifts on this day.

Wigilia - Christmas Eve

Wigilia comes from the Latin word *vigiliare*, which means to watch. In Poland, the word Wigilia used to be known as the day before a feast, and now it means the day before Jesus's birth.

Supper started when the first star appeared on the sky. Menu for this occasion was traditional, unchanging, and very carefully planned. It contained only food from forest, fields, lakes, and orchards. Meat was not allowed on Wigilia. An even number of people was seated at supper table. Number 13 was especially avoided, sign of death in coming year, and every effort was made to invite someone to share the supper – an orphan, stranger, or any single person.

All waited a moment of breaking and sharing Oplatek – a thin wafer. The host and hostess faced one another, then broke and shared a part of the other's wafer. They wished each other fulfillment of their wishes. Then they broke and shared the oplatek with each person present.

The number of dishes served on Wigilia depended on the wealth of the family - five, seven, nine, eleven or thirteen. Uneven number of dishes was to bring harvest and good luck in the following year. Supper started with a choice of a mushroom soup, red beet soup (*barszcz*) with little dumplings (*uszka*), or almond soup. Next came sauerkraut with mushrooms, pierogi with different kinds of filling, potatoes, and noodles with poppy seed. Then several kinds of fish prepared differently – marinated, fried, or broiled - were brought to the table. Dessert consisted of poppy seed with honey, nuts and raisins, fruit compote, and gingerbread cookies or cakes; as well as famous *krupnik* – holiday brandy made out of honey, spices, and alcohol. After supper candles were lit on a tree and gifts exchanged.

At midnight, people went to Pasterka or Midnight Mass. Everybody attended except infants and very sick. After the sermon, the entire congregation sang *Koledy* or Christmas Carols.

On the way back from the mass, men visited the homes of relatives and neighbors. Sometimes a young man visited the home of a young woman whom he liked. Playfully he would snatch an apple from a Christmas tree. If the woman allowed him to keep the apple, he could begin his courting her. The host had appetizers ready for the guests, including *krupnik* and hot tea.

Christmas Day

This day was spent quietly within the intimate family; visiting with friends and relatives would begin the following day, St. Stephen's day. Christmas day was traditionally free of unnecessary work. The menu concentrated on meat, which is probably why the most popular dish on this day was *bigos* or hunter's stew. This dish can and should be prepared ahead of time.

St. Stephen's Day

This day spent on visiting relatives and friends is the second day of Christmas, which is also celebrated as a holiday in Poland. After mass, people threw wheat or rice at each other, to ensure good harvest and wealth in coming year. On this day domestic help was hired or rehired for the coming year and the hostess prepared a special meal for her domestic staff. When one of the staff left the table and did not eat, he indicated he was leaving for employment somewhere else. For the rest of the staff a new contract was sealed for the following year.
