



DECEMBER 2020

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

OUR PARISH GIVING TREE

*CARING AND SHARING WITH THOSE
IN NEED THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON*

What better time of the year than Christmas can we actively live in stewardship? We have so many wonderful opportunities to reach out in hospitality and share our treasure with those in need in our community. Our St. Peter Giving Tree is one such opportunity to share Christ's love.

The Giving Tree will be set up during the first week of Advent and filled with "angel" tags for us to choose on behalf of families served by Catholic Social Services. However, in a departure from the past, Catholic Social Services is not doing the "toy store" as they have done. Eligible parents would have been invited to come in to CSS and choose toys for their children.

To maintain health and safety, however, and to better serve families who have needs beyond the children's toys, the parishes serving CSS will be asked to adopt several families and coordinate directly with CSS.

"Instead of tags requesting toys, we will have 'angel' tags to help about 20 families and also gift cards," says Jean Pearson, Chair of the Giving Tree Ministry that is coordinated by the St. Anthony's Circle of the Parish Council of Catholic Women. "We will be receiving more details on how this is be done."

Besides needy families being able to have a more joyful Christmas, our Giving Tree provides our parish families the chance to help their

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GIVING TREE *continued from front cover*

own children discover the blessings of stewardship.

“That’s the point of stewardship,” Jean says. “It gives parents the opportunity to let their children help other kids who are less fortunate – it signifies more than money in an envelope. Christmas is such a great time to share!”

The gifts provided through CSS also enable the parents served there to experience stewardship, as well.

“This is as important as getting gifts,” Jean says. “As a parent, I know how joyful it is to be able to give something to a child. For a lot of parents served by CSS, when they have to decide between food or gifts, a lot have to choose the less pleasurable of the choices.”

Jean and the other members of the Giving Tree Ministry are very grateful for the outpouring of gifts from

our parish over the years.

“St. Peter is very generous about bringing in gifts,” she says. “We have had to divide our tags for different Masses, otherwise they would all be gone by the later Mass.”

There is a great need for helping hands to collect the gifts and deliver them to CSS.

“There are truckloads,” Jean says. “It is too much to let build up. If anyone can help deliver them, I’d appreciate a call. I’d like to put the call out for help, especially if someone is already going downtown.”

If gifts come in to the Giving Tree past the deadline, they will be taken to CSS.

“CSS is always working with families, and they like to have toys on hand if families come in,” Jean says.

If you have any questions, or would like more information about the Giving Tree, contact Jean Pearson at 402-423-5240 (home), 402-525-1124 (cell) or docplace@yahoo.com.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Christmas and New Year’s Mass Schedule:

Dec. 24 – 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Dec. 25 – 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Dec. 31 – 4:00 p.m.

Jan. 1 – 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Confessions during Advent:

Dec. 19 – 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Dec. 20 – 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Dec. 23 – 12:00-1:00 p.m. and 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Regular Confession times are still available throughout Advent and Christmas.





A Letter from Our Pastor

PREPARING FOR THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

What is the Advent season for? Preparing. For what? Preparing for shopping, food, gift exchange, decoration. Preparing for the birth of Christ.

A while ago, I received a phone call from my cousin, Dustin. He called to ask if I could baptize their soon-to-be baby. We began to discuss life and how it all changes with the birth of a little bundle of joy. He proceeded to tell me about all the preparation that goes into the expectation of a new child. They had to get a room ready, clothes, food, car seat, toys, doctors' visits, and so forth. It has taken them nearly nine months to prepare for this moment which will transform their lives! No one can deny that the birth of a child changes one's life forever.

Just as my cousin, Dustin, and his wife, Alyssa, were preparing for the birth of their son, we too should be preparing for the birth of Jesus Christ in our hearts. How can we prepare for so great of gift? I may propose three ways. There were only three different types of people who found Jesus in the manger, for these people prepared for the anticipated messiah.

First, there were those who prepared by being faithful to God. People such as Mary and Joseph give us great examples to follow. This Advent, we too can prepare the way of the Lord in our heart by seeking the Sacrament of Confession. Those of us who do not seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation could become like the innkeeper of Bethlehem by saying to the Lord, "There is no room for you in my heart."

Secondly, there were those who were simple. The simple shepherds were considered by the Jewish leaders as the *anawim* – the little, poor, insignificant ones. They were outcasts because they smelled like their sheep and were uneducated. However, they had the virtue of humility. They prepared for the coming of the Messiah by living the ordinary life extraordinarily well.

Each year, the Christmas lights go up earlier, the



shopping lists get longer and the parties become overwhelming. All for *what*? Or better yet, all for *who*? In the present secular age and the 'advent' of materialism, we must pause and reflect upon the profound mystery of God becoming man.

Finally, there were those who were *wise*. The three Magi from the East used the gift of their intellect to find the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. The gift of wisdom is not granted through a degree nor age, but through experiencing the love of God in prayer. I invite you to spend some time with God in prayer each day this Advent.

At that first Christmas, those who found the Lord in the manger brought gifts. Mary and Joseph provided their lives as a gift exchange for the gift of salvation. The shepherds provided a baby lamb to the Lamb of God, Who would be slain for our sins. The Magi provided gold because Jesus was King; incense because He was God; and myrrh because He would die as a man.

You probably don't have a lamb or gold, frankincense or myrrh to give to God this Christmas, so I have provided for you a Christmas Wish List on page 5 of the things that your parish needs this season.

Just as the birth of a natural son transforms the lives of parents, so too does the birth of the Son of God transform eternity! May we prepare to find Him this year by being faithful just as Mary and Joseph had? May we become simple like the shepherds in the field in order to find the King of the universe in a humble manger? May we search for Jesus Christ through wisdom like the Magi from the East?

In His Mercy,

Fr. Eric Clark,
Pastor



FAITH PARTNERS:

BRINGING HOPE TO THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION

“Imagine people in your congregation being as comfortable bringing casseroles to a family whose mother is in alcohol or drug treatment as one who is hospitalized for cancer.”

This hope, expressed by Rev. Otto Schultz in the brochure for the Nebraska Faith Partners, gets right to the heart of this program’s mission to provide caring support for anyone expressing personal or family concerns with alcohol, drugs, or mental health. While the services of Faith Partners go far beyond the simple gesture of a hot meal, the core message remains – the people of St. Peter are here for you every step of the way.

Faith Partners, Inc., was founded in Texas in 1995 to provide faith communities with a team approach for reaching out to those struggling with drug and alcohol addictions. Today, the organization has programs in over 20 states, with churches of various denominations coordinating Faith Partners Ministry teams. Here in Nebraska, Rev. Schultz helps churches initiate and develop this valuable program.

Parishioner Brad Decker first had the idea to initiate a Faith Partners Ministry at St. Peter back in February. Since then, he has been focused on developing a resource team here at St. Peter, in collaboration with Faith Partners

Nebraska, Region V Prevention Systems, and four other local parishes – St. John, St. Joseph, St. Michael, and Cathedral of the Risen Christ.

Like so many, Brad knows firsthand how life-changing programs such as Faith Partners can be. Brad grew up in an alcoholic family and has been working in drug and alcohol counseling for four years now helping people find different support groups and treatment options.

Knowing that the first step toward healing is often the most difficult, Brad views Faith Partners as a crucial service to those seeking a listening ear and resources on addiction recovery.

“A lot of times, people just don’t know where to start,” he says. “So, it’s important that they can be given the comfort in knowing that their church, their congregation, their parish have people that they can just pull aside and talk to, and that will help them wade through the uncertainty of the process. We have a collection of resources – community resources, 12-step meetings, other group settings, and additional assistance – needed for guiding people through the process, including Catholic Social Services and counseling programs that are available.”

In the United States each year, there are about 90,000



Parishioner Brad Decker spearheads our parish’s Faith Partners Ministry team

deaths related to alcohol abuse and another 50,000 to opioids. In a recent survey of 11 Nebraska congregations, 44 percent of respondents said that they or someone close to them was affected by addiction. Despite its prevalence, many individuals and families suffering from addiction may still feel judged for their struggles.

“Rev. Otto Schultz calls addiction ‘a casserole disease,’ meaning if someone is in the hospital, you bring a casserole, so why is addiction not considered in the same way?” Brad says. “He’s trying to pierce through that stigma when it isn’t respected in that way, and when families are not willing to talk about it.”



HOPE

Resource team members with the Faith Partners Ministry receive state-provided training on the different ways they can provide caring support to those struggling with addiction. The ministry does not provide counseling services. Rather, team members are available to anyone looking for someone to whom they can reach out and share their concerns. The specific support they may offer is highly adaptable and specific to each individual's needs, and strict confidentiality is always

maintained.

"It's kind of a referral system, letting people know that there are people in the church willing to listen, educate and guide them to going in the direction that they might need," Brad says.

Now that Brad has begun the process of starting a Faith Partners Ministry here at St. Peter, he hopes that many parishioners will be interested in becoming a part of our resource team. As a witness to the countless good works of our faith community, he does not

doubt that this new ministry, too, will offer solace and direction to many families and individuals.

"With all the leadership and the parish involvement, St. Peter has been a very solid and forward-thinking parish, and innovative in how they can serve and help the community," he says. "I'm excited about the long-term potential Faith Partners could have – not only in our parish but throughout the diocese – as a pathway for people to strengthen their connection with their church."

Would you like to learn more about the new Faith Partners Ministry at St. Peter? If you are interested in serving as a resource team member, or if you or someone you know might benefit from the services of Faith Partners, please contact Brad Decker at fpstpeter@gmail.com or 402-413-5323.

OUR PARISH AND SCHOOL WISH LIST

PARISH

- ❖ *Tables for Bishop Vasa Hall (\$7,500)*
- ❖ *Replace Carpet in Meeting Room (\$4,800)*
- ❖ *Handicap Front Door (\$4,500)*
- ❖ *Dead Tree Removal (\$1800)*
- ❖ *Updated Parish Office Computer (two @ \$750 each = \$1,500)*

SCHOOL

- ❖ *Vacuums (two @ \$500 each = \$1,000)*
- ❖ *Roller Skate Rental (\$7/student = \$2,000)*

Check out the entire list [here](#).





BEGIN THE JOURNEY *Home* FOR CHRISTMAS

Christ was born the son of a poor carpenter. This was by no means an accident. His birth was the culmination of salvation history, as it profoundly revealed the glory of God. Infinite power and wisdom took the form “of a servant, coming in human likeness” (Phil 2:7) – not as a warrior, but a poor and vulnerable babe.

Every aspect of Christ’s birth, from the three kings to the swaddling clothes, carries meaning. The proclamation of the angel, therefore, is also important: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Lk 2:10). This message, meant to be for “all the people,” was announced to a group of shepherds in a field out in the middle of nowhere. Was this accidental? Not at all.

The shepherds, who received a personal invitation to greet Christ at the manger, reveal that God’s love extends beyond boundaries of distance and transcends social classes. Unlike persons of this world who yearn to gain recognition with those of influence, wealth or beauty, Christ cries out to the lowly in society – to the shepherds in the distance. He reaches out in love, desiring a relationship with every single person, no matter

their status. This is the “good news of great joy for all people” – Christ was born for us all.

Christmas is the perfect time for distant shepherds to begin the journey home. The angel’s greeting extends to all those who feel estranged from the Church or numb to God’s love. Those who have fallen away from the faith can be comforted by these words: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord” (Lk 2:10-11).

Be not afraid. The Christ Child awaits your arrival. Begin the journey back to Christ by drawing near to His body, the Church. Through prayer and the sacraments, you will discover the great joy that accompanies a relationship with God. Take a moment to ask the Lord to bring peace to your heart and guide you in love towards Him. Please join our parish family for the final preparations of Advent, as well as the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses.

You have read this entire article and have received a personal invitation to begin the journey. Accidental? Not a chance.



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

TAKING THE TIME TO NURTURE OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH THE LORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ wants nothing more than for us to enter deeply in relationship with Him. As Catholics, we are blessed with the opportunity to sit and pray in His true presence every time we come to Eucharistic Adoration. At St. Peter, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed on the altar each weekday from 7 a.m. until 8 a.m. During this hour, we are invited to come and open our hearts to the Lord as we would with any close friend or family member.

Katy Dornbos recently became the volunteer coordinator for adoration at St. Peter. For Katy, spending time in adoration is a wonderful way to nurture a close relationship with Christ.

“I remember something Matthew Kelly wrote about the importance of ‘carefree timelessness’ in friendships, an abundance of time with nothing planned other than just being together,” she says. “I like to think of praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament as ‘carefree timelessness’ with God. All sorts of things come up in prayer, there is no urgency, no lie that time is running out, or that something must be accomplished. It’s just time to be with God.”

Adorers spend their time in the presence of the Eucharist in many different ways — some pray the Rosary, some read Scripture or another spiritual text, and others journal



Eucharistic Adoration at St. Peter

about their faith journey or prayer life. For many people, adoration is a time to simply “converse” with the Lord, sharing with Him everything from their daily tasks to their greatest trials and triumphs.

No matter how you spend your time there, one thing about adoration is a constant — the peace and quiet that are so difficult to find anywhere else in our busy lives.

“Most noticeable is the silence,” Katy says. “Silence magnifies what’s going on in my interior life — that God is unafraid of sin, that He created me to be with me, and He wants to know what I’m thinking, feeling and desiring. Having prolonged silence gives me time

and space to wait for God — and He does show up. He is near, He is creative, always here with me. Resisting the urge to fill the silence is a real gift.”

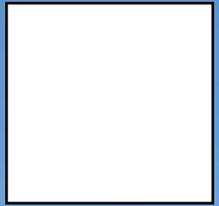
As Katy points out, adoration is a time of formation that strengthens our relationship with and love for God.

“Jesus said, ‘I myself will shepherd them’ and ‘Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest,’” Katy says. “When we come to adoration, the very act is trusting in God’s promise. The Holy Spirit instructs our hearts, and adoration gives us and God time to hear what God envisions for us as individuals, and as

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ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



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MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

DAILY MASS

Monday-Friday: 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m.

Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

CONFESSION:

Monday & Wednesday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Saturday: 3:00-4:00 p.m.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION *continued from page 7*

a parish family. The more parishioners pray, the more we are conformed to the life of the Trinity, which is a deep and fruitful relationship. We grow closer to God and each other through adoration."

All parishioners and visitors are welcome to come experience Eucharistic Adoration on weekday mornings. With about 60 percent of our adoration hours currently covered by a scheduled adorer, we pray that many more parishioners will prayerfully consider committing to a weekly hour. Hours may even be shared among family members or other groups, such as Bible studies. All are welcome to consider attending Exposition and Adoration at our parish — we look forward to a fruitful year to come!

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— Katy Dornbos

For more information on Eucharistic Adoration or to become a regularly scheduled adorer, simply visit our parish website at www.saintpeterslincoln.com/perpetual-adoration.html or email Katy Dornbos at kldornbos@gmail.com.