

“HAVE YOU HEARD?!”

ST THERESE NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

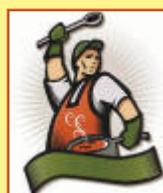
The 4th Annual Soup & Chili Cook Off – 2021 Style

This year, parishioners from both parishes participated in the 4th Annual Soup & Chili Cook Off via pre-order with Drive-Thru convenience. The event was sponsored by the Parish Council and featured a 4-pack of soups & chili of which 3 were past winning recipes along with a vegetarian one taken from our Cookbook. In addition the pack included crackers, fresh bread and butter. Fr. John took the lead as one of the best dressed car-hops with fast, courteous & blessed services. We limited the crew to 10 people per the CDC guidelines, and all the soups were prepared in a common kitchen. I can honestly say I finally won the Competition, as there were no other contestants!!! We also featured

Spogles from Kiedrowski's Bakery in Amherst and a 50-50 split raffle which yielded two winners of \$40.00 each. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and participated. It was a great way to keep in touch during our Winter months.



By Frank Kozuch,
Event Coordinator





Spring 2021

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord be with you! I pray that these words of mine and this whole newsletter finds you well. I know that many people are hoping that this year will bring us back a level of normalcy and community that 2020 sorely lacked. Building on my last newsletter, I wanted to go over how the Covid 19 Pandemic has and has not affected our parishes. Certainly, this past year has been trying, but we have much to be proud of and much more to be thankful for.

First, let's examine Mass attendance and how things have fared.

Mass Time	February 2020	February 2021	% Change
4:00pm Vigil Mass	150	72	-52%
5:30pm Vigil Mass	90	58	-35%
8:30am Sunday Mass	100	56	-44%
10:30am Sunday Mass	190	83	-56%
Total	530	269	-49%

Before I go on, I should note that back in November of 2020 we were averaging almost 375 people a weekend. Then Christmas happened and our Mass attendance - much to my surprise at the time - declined approximately 10%. Since December 2020 levels have not really recovered beyond 50% of our pre-Covid numbers. To be fair, we also have to account for all the people praying at home. That is a difficult number to guess, but approximately 50 families a weekend tune in to our YouTube channel, and that has varied from 40 to 60 families every week. I would guess that at least an additional fifty families are using another parish's livestream (which we can't do) or online recording. If we then estimate that 1.5 people are watching for each view, we can estimate that as of February about 400 people are either worshipping in person or using the Internet to keep Sunday holy. That would be a decline of only 24% from before Covid.

Second, despite the above decline in Mass attendance, our overall collections have been strong. Comparing July 2020 to February 2021 with July 2019 to February 2020, Ss. Peter and Paul's general collection declined \$7,000 (a 5% decline), and St. Therese's collection declined just under \$3,000 (a 1.7% decline). During this period of time, however, both parishes have been operating in the black because our investments have been doing very well. Going from February 2020 to February 2021, St. Therese went from \$751,834.08 to \$835,506.24. During the same time Ss. Peter and Paul went from \$1,234,487.88 to \$1,435,327.97 (this includes monies collected from the sale of their school building). Accordingly, Covid 19 has not really impacted either parish's short term finances much. That accomplishment has little to do with me and my now legendary thrift and everything to do with your continued generosity. Thank you and may God bless you for it!

Third, we have not seen an increase or decrease in funerals at either parish. Since coming to Garfield Heights, both parishes have averaged between 60 and 70 funerals total per year so that I celebrate at least one a week. Of course, funerals are not evenly distributed but unfortunately tend to cluster together. From February 2020 to February 2021, St. Therese had 32 funerals and Ss. Peter and Paul had 31. As far as I know, only two of those funerals (one at each parish) were directly caused by Covid 19. Now it could be that people simply did not tell me, so it could be a higher number. Nevertheless, neither I nor the funeral directors that I work with have seen a significant increase in funerals from the pandemic. Each death is a tragedy and often a great hardship to the family. What has changed about funerals, however, is the dramatic decrease in the size and attendance of wakes. With few exceptions and for obvious reasons, people have attended funeral Masses more than wakes during the pandemic.

What does the above mean for us going forward? We have weathered a great trial over the last year, and we have weathered it well. However you may wish to characterize our political leaders, I can testify that the people of St. Therese and Ss. Peter and Paul have done well. I know that not everyone feels comfortable leaving their home and attending Mass, but I am happy that so many already do. Obviously, it will take more time for this pandemic to end. As of the writing of this article, Covid 19 deaths are down 77% since the beginning of the year for the United States. If that trend continues, herd immunity will be reached by the end of April. If that happens, we probably reach something close to normal by the end of summer. We have carried this cross well; may we carry whatever cross God gives us as Christ did. For His Glory and for the salvation of souls.

In Christ, Fr. John



Friendly Faces

If you have stopped at the rectory lately you may have already met our new office manager, Kevin McManamon, and his spunky companion, Coco.

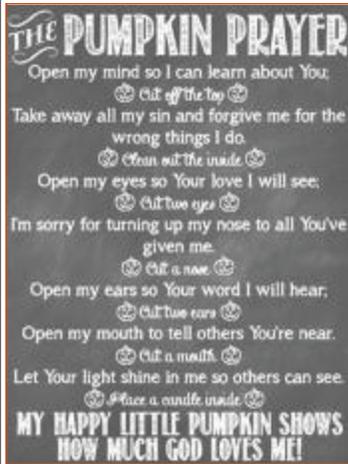
Kevin was hired last fall to help Fr. John with the administrative duties of running both parishes, splitting time between the two. His extensive experience from careers in the banking and insurance sectors brings a wealth of knowledge to the administrative side of running an office.

Kevin belongs to St. Rita Parish in Solon and is extremely active in many of their parish organizations. This also gives him insight into how parish activities and office administration are uniquely tied together. One of his favorite activities was setting up Donut Sunday and he looks forward to the day when we can safely do that again.

After changes in his life, Kevin found his home empty and in need of a spark to liven things up. Enter "Coco", a four-year-old Australian Cattle Hound rescue dog. Coco is now his constant companion and accompanies him to work every day.

Kevin and Coco look forward to you stopping in for a cheery "Hi" from him and a friendly "Woof" from Coco.

Pumpkin Projects and Weekly Challenges Make Learning Fun



“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Since the last newsletter, PSR has been busy learning about the Gospels and themes related to them.

In October, the students and catechist completed a pumpkin project using The Pumpkin Prayer. They asked God to open their minds so they can learn more about God, to remove their sin and forgive them, to open their eyes to see God’s love, to forgive them when they are not grateful for what they have, to open their ears to hear God’s words, to open their mouths to tell others about God, and to let their light shine to others.

During Advent, the PSR families had the opportunity to complete a weekly challenge to help them better prepare for the Infant Jesus. Some challenges were centered

around Jesus and others were centered around Feast Days during that week. Everyone is encouraged and welcome to try the Lenten Challenges that are in the bulletins!

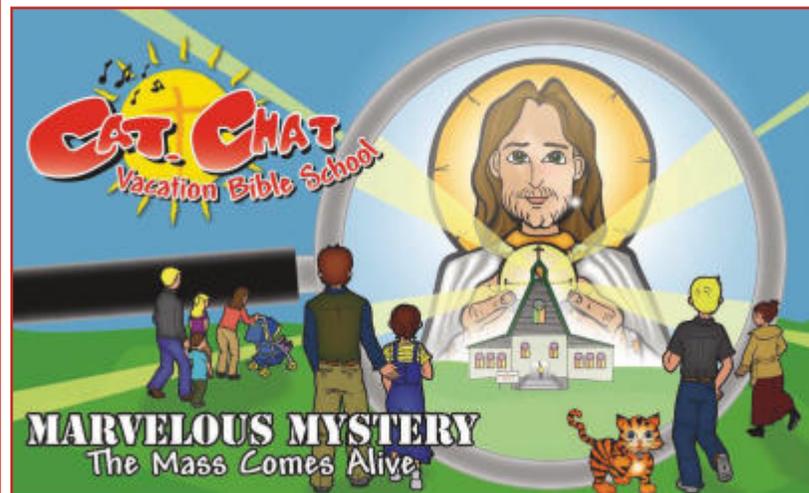


The end of the 2020 year, we held a drive-thru Christmas pick up for our last class of the year. Each student received a meal, cupcake and a Christmas present.

2021 has started off quietly, but the PSR Program has a lot planned for Lent and the end of the year!

Continue to keep our students and catechists in your prayers as they continue to learn and teach about our faith!

By Joanna M. Parsons, PSR Coordinator
PSR_Program@sttheresegarfield.org



COMING THIS SUMMER!

July 12th to 16th we will be hosting a Vacation Bible School!

This summer children from ages 4 to 11 will have the opportunity to discover more about the Catholic Mass and deepen their love of Jesus through music, dance, crafts, games, and various traditions of our faith. Registration will open in May 2021. For more information, go to sttheresegarfield.org or call the rectory.

Vacation Bible School will need volunteers as Station Leaders (Craft, Music, Drama, Games and Faith), Kitchen Crew Members and Security Team Members. Please call the rectory if interested.

Learning to Live "Fruitful" Lives



Last youth group meeting we decided for the New Year that we would all focus on incorporating more fruit into our lives. The fruit we need won’t be coming from any grocery store and we won’t actually be eating it. This fruit we are talking about comes directly from The Holy Spirit and we need to focus on nurturing and growing these spiritual fruits.

We took a look at St. Paul’s words in Galatians 5:22-23 : “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” After prayer and reflection, each person chose a fruit that they felt was needed in their life and wrote it down on a colorful index card. The card will serve as a visual reminder to focus

on that fruit every day and ask the Holy Spirit to help us harvest and share these fruits.

We realized that these special fruits can help us in our daily lives. When we are faced with troubles or problems we can turn to this verse and ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen our faith and refresh our lives.

It’s the perfect time to start adding fruit into our lives, don’t you think?

By Tracy Johnson, Youth 412 Minister
Youth_Group@sttheresegarfield.org



Living the Liturgy – November thru Christmas

November 1st –All Saints Day...

On this day we remember all those who have gone before us leading such exemplary lives that they have been canonized as Saints. We are encouraged to find a saint that we can relate to and put into practice the same traits that led them to sainthood.



November 2nd –All Souls Day... Fr. John, assisted by Deacon Bob, celebrated the All Souls Day Mass remembering all parishioners who had died during the past year. A lighted candle honored each parishioner. Fr. John wore black vestments, the long-time tradition before the Second Vatican Council. The color is a symbol of the sorrow and mourning that we all feel at the loss of a loved one.



November 29th thru December 20th –The Sundays of Advent... Advent is the season of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Each Sunday we light a candle of the Advent wreath to remind us to prepare our hearts and minds in anticipation of the joys of Christmas.

Preparing the Church... Just as one would prepare their home for a special guest, so too do we prepare the altar and church for a fitting celebration of the Birth of Our Lord. Deacon Bob and his helpers – Cindy, Tracy, Jeff, Chris and Eric, diligently worked to set up the trees and the beautiful manger scenes, both on the altar and outside the front of the church. A beautiful new wreath decorated the choir loft.



Christmas Celebration... Prior to the Midnight Mass at 10:00, a special Musical Prelude was presented to set the tone for the beautiful celebration of the Birth of Our Lord. During the Christmas octave, we were blessed to see Father Dan return to the parish to fill in while Fr. John was in quarantine.

Epiphany... Traditionally January 6th, “Little Christmas” tells the story of the three Wise Men bringing gifts to honor the birth of a King. We can be reminded that we all have gifts to offer by making good use of, and sharing, the talents and treasures God has given us.



Celebrating the St. Therese-Ss. Peter & Paul Staff and Music Ministry

In lieu of our Annual Christmas gathering due to Covid-19 restrictions on holiday parties, we celebrated by offering the Staff and Music Ministers a Holiday Gift Basket. Each contained a common theme of a Christmas Celebration to be enjoyed at home with a variety of things associated with a joyous celebration. There were Soda beverages, hot cocoa packets, jingle bells, a Christmas ornament, popcorn, homemade cookies, cheese and crackers, and so much more including popcorn, all nestled in a popcorn bowl. The baskets were numbered and you pulled a number to see which one to get, as the values varied from \$30 to \$50 each. We all seemed to enjoy having a common bonding remembrance of our Christmas apart this year. Each one was carefully packaged, wrapped and adorned with the message below:



Your Holiday Gift Basket



May you find a little jingle to ring in the holidays, a candle to light your way like that first star, some glitz & glamour you deserve, sparkling water to celebrate safely, a few sweets that pave the way for Santa, a bit of elegance that shimmers like a Winter Wonderland, Hot Cocoa to keep us warm inside, and homemade baked goods that help us cherish the many traditions we have in our hearts.

by Frank Kozuch, Music Director



To Sing or Not to Sing - a COVID-19 question

Music is a form of prayer, whether intoned and sung or instrumentally performed as reflection. The controversy has been brought up over and over about congregational and choir participation with regards to singing. Diocesan guidelines have cited a few case studies. However these have not been approved by the Vatican.

Now keep in mind we are all masked in church, and keeping socially distant. We have eliminated the opening and closing hymns, and only sing the Mass parts, Responsorial Psalm and two short hymns. I feel we are well within compliance and still able to participate and enjoy our musical adoration.

Numerous concerts, seminars and performances across the country were cancelled in 2020 and well into 2021. For the most part, all our choir activities have been postponed. However we still try to keep in touch with ongoing events such as our Summer Picnic and Christmas Party packs. Some events are held virtually or in person by a soloist along with the organist. Lofts can usually accommodate enough spacing for 2 or 3 people. Why even percussionists have special masks with an overlapping slit for the mouthpiece and a bonnet that fits over the end of instrument. Eric Holler has played his trumpet at our parishes and uses both of course.



Please remember our weekend Mass is available on YouTube and linked to our website. It is very exciting to see more and more people actually coming back to church in person. They must realize we take every precaution for the safety and health of our parishioners by sanitizing our church, offering hymnals to take with you, socially distant pew seating and Communion service. Come back and join us again!

By Frank Kozuch, Music Director

Newsletter Staff

- Char Jeloveck.....Creative Design, Photography
- Cindy Kiel.....Parish Liaison
- Virginia Langood.....Parish Photographer
- Jan Shafts.....Writer
- Pam Skernivitz.....Writer, Editor
- Contributing Columns**
- Father John.....Pastor's Column
- Frank Kozuch.....Special Reporting

St. Therese News, Notes and Activities

Sharing Their Story



Longtime parishioners and members of many parish organizations through the years, Bob and Kathy Cermak are sharing their ordeal with COVID-19.

Despite practicing the utmost safety precautions, the virus invaded their lives. Kathy was asymptomatic and only found out through antibody testing. Bob was not so fortunate. He spent a week and a half at Marymount on oxygen, including a week in ICU. No visitors were allowed and the chaplain had to visit from outside the room, speaking through the glass.

Bob and Kathy are both doing well now and credit their deep faith in God and the love and prayers of family and friends for seeing them through their ordeal. They are looking forward to scheduling their vaccinations and hope that everyone takes all precautions available to protect themselves and their loved ones. They don't wish this virus on anyone.



The Feast of St. Blaise

Traditionally celebrated on February 3rd, the Blessing of Throats was moved to Sunday, February 7th. St. Blaise was a 4th century Armenian bishop who was martyred. He is said to have healed a boy who was choking. Since the eighth century he has been venerated as the patron of those who suffer from diseases of the throat. The blessing of St. Blaise is a sign of our faith in God's protection and love for us and for the sick.



Knights of Columbus Memorial Mass

In November the Knights of Columbus held their annual Memorial Mass at St. Therese Parish. During this Mass a candle was lit to honor each Knight and Isabella Guild member who had died during the prior year. Father Norm was the celebrant for this Mass and spent time after visiting with the Knights and the ladies of the Isabella Guild who attended the Mass.



Holy Week and Easter Schedule



Wednesday, March 31	Tenebrae 7:30pm	St. Therese
Thursday, April 1	Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:00pm	St. Therese
	Mass is followed by Adoration until 10:30, followed by Night Prayer at St. Therese	
Friday, April 2	Celebration of the Lord's Passion 3:00pm	St. Therese followed by Confession
	Celebration of the Lord's Passion 7:00pm	Ss. Peter & Paul followed by Confession
Saturday, April 3	Blessing of Food 1:00pm	at St. Therese
	Blessing of Food 2:00pm	at Ss. Peter & Paul
	Easter Vigil Mass 8:30pm	at Ss. Peter & Paul
Easter Sunday, April 4	Mass at 8:30am at both parishes	
	Mass at 10:30am at both parishes	

In January St. Therese lost one of the pillars of the St. Therese Parish community, John Kipfstuhl. The following tribute was written by John's niece, Renee Kipfstuhl Lesko.

John Kipfstuhl (1926-2021)

John Kipfstuhl was born and raised in Garfield Hts, OH and then raised his family there

One of 8 children, growing up on Melgrove Ave and attending St. Timothy parish and school

Husband to Patricia Kipfstuhl (nee Baczkowski). They celebrated their 65th anniversary on October 8, 2020

Nurturing father to Deacon Paul Kipfstuhl, Diane Wieland (deceased), and Mary Jane Light,
all St. Therese School alum

Kept busy in retirement – he was a funeral altar server and active in the Cathedral Latin Alumni Association

Indian's Usher during his off days from the firehouse, including the 1948 World Series

Proud Grandfather to 3 grandsons and 4 granddaughters, who were his world and lived nearby while growing up

Firefighter for the City of Garfield Hts for 38 years, retiring with the rank of Captain

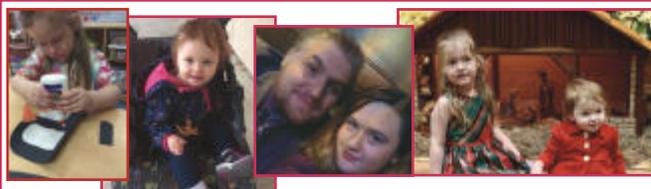
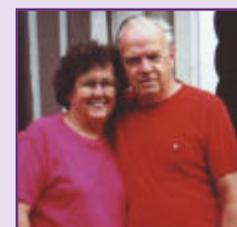
Served in the US Army for 2 years during World War 2 - earning an honorable discharge as a Staff Sergeant

Traveled to Lake George, NY with his family for many (50+) summers beginning in August 1960.

Uncle "Bud" to his many nieces and nephews, including the 5 daughters of his brother,
Jim (wife Karen) Kipfstuhl - also St. Therese parishioners

Holy Name Society President and Donut Sunday organizer, serving coffee and donuts until COVID-19
put an end to the gatherings in early 2020

Left a legacy as a man who loved God, his country, and his family -living a life of service to all



A Glimpse into the Parsons' Home

It's never a dull moment in the Parsons' home. Every day is a new adventure with a 3-½ year old and an almost 1-½ year old.

Theresa is now in Preschool and learning new skills every day. From counting to 15 independently, to recognizing the letters

of the alphabet and numbers 1 through 20, she is constantly amazing us with her intelligence.

Our little Anastasia may be small, but she doesn't let her size stand in her way. She is now walking (mainly running) everywhere and climbing whatever she can find. She loves to talk and is learning more and more words each day.

My husband and I celebrated our 4-year wedding anniversary on October 1st. We are grateful for each day we have with each other and make a special effort to celebrate the special days in our relationship. We are excited to see what God has planned for us in the future, and until then we remain forever grateful for the blessings He has given us, including our health, home, children and love.

By Joanna Parsons

Treasure in our midst... For the most part we are meant to be social beings. The pandemic situation that we've been in for over a year now has interrupted most of the social connections we had grown used to. We have had to find new ways to experience the togetherness that we all yearn for.

For some of us we have found a more complete togetherness with God and our faith as shown through parishioner stories in our newsletters. For others there is a closer togetherness with spouses and family. Slowly and surely we are finding ways to safely experience a return to togetherness with our parish family.

As 2021 unfolds it is hoped that this treasure of togetherness can once again be fully enjoyed and the social contact we all long for can finally return to normal.

(Editor's note: Thank you again to the parishioners who sent in stories or provided information for our newsletter. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.)

By Pamela Skernivitz



Our parish community joins family and friends in wishing all our members who celebrate a 90th or greater birthday this period (*Jan thru Apr*) a very Happy Birthday. May each of you continue to receive the light of God's blessings in your lives.

Ediziana Damicone, Martha Desalvatore, Rose Milbert, Alice Petrella, Richard Snider, Eleanor Sloat, Eleanore Bugara, James Dooner, Marcella Cobb, Genevieve Sunday, Ross DeSimone, Michael Kalanish, Margaret Kolar, Eleanor Fedinets, Virginia Szubra, Ted Roesch, Bridget Basta, Lucille Piechowski, Dorothy Bujakowski, Daniel Binkowski, Oliver Erney, Loria Lenarduzzi and Angeline Domen

Having Fun and Being Creative While Social Distancing

Enjoying the Beauty of Nature



During Christmas break we took a ride to Chagrin Falls mainly to get out of the house. As we entered the town square there was a large decorated Christmas tree by the gazebo and all the lamp posts and stores were decorated for the holidays. But the highlight was the decorated trees along the river -- even the full moon joined in! We also drove through the nearby neighborhood where many of the old, large, Victorian homes were decorated to add to the beauty of the season.



By Jan Shafts

Family Christmas Fun...



Chris and Jeff Holler received a gift of a private screening at Cinemark from their daughter Lauren at Christmas. Joining Jeff and Chris on Christmas night to see the movie "Elf" were Lauren and her boyfriend Brendan, their son Eric, and their son Brian and his fiancée Morgan. Getting out of the house and doing something as a family in a safe environment during these times was a gift they all truly appreciated.



Creativity on Display



My husband and I participated in the nighttime drive-thru at the Asian Lantern Festival sponsored by the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.



The brilliant colors and the fabulous displays were absolutely beautiful and so creative. We would highly recommend this event.



By Pam Skernivitz

HOPES OF '21

I'm hoping for a better time
In this year of '21
The last one felt so heavy
It seemed to weigh a ton

The "COVID" word seemed easy,
Pandemic not so much;
Six feet of "social distance"
I learned to measure like a crutch.

I'm glad to be at Mass again
And receive the Eucharist.
I just wish the holy water
Wasn't sanitizer mist.

My problem wasn't just the weight
I added to my frame;
I also had to hide my face,
As if to live in shame.

My simple weekly grocery trip
Now took a longer while;
My buying wasn't any more,
Just wrong direction in each aisle.

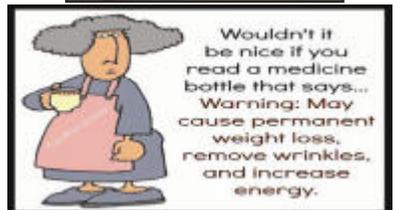
Now if my hopes don't quite work out
You won't find me to task;
My head has grown a lot more hair
And I just bought a larger mask.

By Doug Proehl

New words began to crowd my brain
So many years since school
In figuring out a ZOOM call
I felt like such a fool.

Familiar family gatherings
Were now treated as taboo
And visiting at the hospital
Just through the glass like at the zoo.

(Editor's note: My brother, Doug, spent some of his time being creative and writing poetry. This is a shortened sampling he sent to me regarding the whole COVID experience.)



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