



St. Aloysius, St. Joseph (Wapakoneta), St. Francis,
St. Joseph (Egypt), St. Anthony, Immaculate Conception,
St. Bernard, St. Henry, St. Augustine, St. Wendelin,
Precious Blood, St. Rose, St. Patrick, St. John (Fryburg),
St. Joseph (St. Joseph), St. Teresa, St. Peter, St. Mary,
St. John the Baptist, Holy Trinity, St. Paul, St. Sebastian,
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Holy Redeemer, Holy Rosary,
Mary Help of Christians, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Northern Lights

Spring 2014—Volume 61

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:14

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From the Desk of the Dean

Welcome to this edition of the Northern Lights!

I recently heard about a priest in Africa who came to our country for the first time. He had never been to this country before, nor had he ever been to any northern climates. He came in the fall season as the leaves were turning brown and falling to the ground. This change in season was all new to the priest. The only climate he had known was the constantly green and tropical climate of his native country. Evidently, the change in season from summer to fall and fall into winter had a marked effect on his spirits. He became depressed and withdrawn, for the world as he knew it seemed to be coming to an end. It looked bleak, lifeless, and generally without hope.

I suspect that even for us “northerners” who are used to a change in seasons, it might have felt the same way to us. By all accounts, it has been a long, hard winter. Cold and snow seemed to be less a temporary condition than a permanent way of life! In these past several months, maybe you also felt a sense of hopelessness at times, as if there were no light at the end of the tunnel.

The Easter season speaks to our dispirited condition. It’s God’s pledge of deliverance—and the spring weather is only a sign of this deliverance. In the deepest way possible, Easter speaks to the renewal of all creation. It reveals in the risen Christ the God who creates us so that we can be recreated into life immortal. As much as Lent reminded us of the dying that must first take place, Easter celebrates that dying is only a turning point, not an ending point. The prayer of the funeral liturgy says it well: “For your faithful people, Lord, life is changed, not ended.”

I hope you’ll find this edition of the Northern Lights a sign of Easter hope among the people of the St. Marys Deanery.



Celebration of Administrative Professionals’ Day

By: **Katie Eilerman**

In lieu of Administrative Professionals’ Day, an appreciation event was held for parish secretaries of the St. Marys Deanery on April 22nd. Fr. Louis Schmit, C.P.P.S., former pastor of the Minster cluster, presented on “The Ministry of a Secretary”. He spoke on the wonderful blessings of a secretary and how she is a pastor’s left and right hand.



Fr. Louis Schmit, C.P.P.S. speaking to area parish secretaries.

Fr. Louis recalled when he first became the pastor of the Minster cluster. When starting this new journey, the secretary helped him meet parishioners, teach him what to do in emergencies and guide him in many other ways. He was and still is very grateful for all of the work and dedication parish secretaries provide to our pastors and the life of our parish. May we all remember to appreciate and thank our parish secretaries for their unflinching and often unseen help!

Stephen Ministry

By: Polly Scherger

Love one another as I have loved you. John 13:34

Christ cares for people through people. St. Joseph's parish in Wapakoneta has had an outreach ministry since 1996, the Stephen Ministry, that does just that and can serve the people in and around the Petersburg cluster. Stephen Ministry is a worldwide Christian caregiving organization that has a membership of over 10,000 congregations. It was started by Kenneth Haugh, PhD, a pastor and a clinical psychologist. He realized that there were more needs for care in his congregation than he could meet. He trained lay members of his congregation to provide one to one, gender to gender, confidential Christian care. He named it Stephen Ministry because St. Stephen was the first layperson commissioned by the apostles to provide caring ministry to those in need. (Acts 6)

Stephen Ministers commit to two years of service and receive 50 hours of training in Christian care, with some topics being confidentiality, listening, boundaries, assertiveness, and grief. The Stephen Ministers meet twice a month for two and a half hours for prayer, structured supervision, and continuing education. Stephen Ministers are not therapists, counselors, or problem solvers. They do not run errands or help with chores. Stephen Ministry is a free service that ministers to people experiencing any kind of life transition or difficulty. A Stephen Minister will listen and not judge. The Stephen Minister and the care receiver meet regularly. A Stephen Minister is someone who will care and share God's love with you. The Stephen Minister will be Christ's healing presence.



Visit stephenministries.org to learn more about Stephen Ministry or for more information on St. Joseph/Petersburg Cluster Stephen Ministry please contact St. Joseph parish office at 419-738-2115 or Stephen Leader, Polly Scherger, at 419-738-8098 or at stjoesm@bright.net.



In honor of Mary during the month of May:

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, and tender Mother of all people, I consecrate myself to your Immaculate Heart, and recommend to you my family, my country, and the whole human race. Please accept my consecration, dearest Mother, and use me as you wish, to accomplish your designs upon the world. O Immaculate Heart of Mary, Queen of Heaven and earth, rule over me, and teach me how to allow the Heart of Jesus to rule and triumph in me and around me, as it has ruled and triumphed in you. Amen.

http://catholicism.about.com/od/tothevirginmary/qt/Consecration_to_the_Immaculate_Heart.htm

Spiritual Center of Maria Stein

By: Robin Goettemoeller



Tulips and daffodils are appearing; birds have begun preparing their nests; children are playing outside again. Warmer temperatures and additional sunlight are signs that Spring has finally sprung! This Spring, while you're busy enjoying everything outside, take some time for yourself to grow your own faith too. The Spiritual Center of Maria Stein, 2365 St. Johns Road, continues to offer different opportunities for people to grow in their faith.

Consider one of these three upcoming retreats starting with "Praying in Color" (July 7-11). This retreat gives participants the opportunity to explore different forms of prayer through art. July 21-25 Father Al Naseman will be leading "Holy Gastronomy". This retreat is all about food and love will include surprise tastings as well as watercolor illustrations by Fr. Al! August 4-8 the Sisters of the Children of Mary will be leading "If you ask, Jesus will heal you!" If you are looking for some quiet time this retreat is for you. **Join us for a retreat that takes you away from your daily routine and leads you closer to your faith!** To register for an event, or for more information contact us at 419-925-7625 or office@spiritualcenter.net. Check out our website at www.spiritualcenter.net.



Area Parishes Celebrate Anniversaries

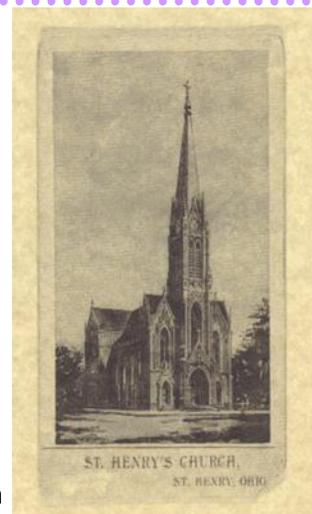
Several parishes within the St. Marys Deanery are celebrating anniversaries in 2014. Learn how these parishes began and continue to thrive.

St. Henry Church, St. Henry Celebrating 175 Years **By: Jane Woods**

Bishop John B. Purcell gave his permission to form St. Henry Parish in 1839 with 18 Catholic families in the area. St. Henry Parish was named in honor of Henry II who was a Bavarian duke, a German king, and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Mass was held once a month in the log house of John Gerhard and Rebecca Beckman by itinerant priests. Bishop Purcell dedicated the first church which was built of logs on lot 33 (172 E. Main St. area) in 1842, although the church had been completed in 1840.

In 1846 the Society of the Precious Blood priests arrived in Maria Stein and made Mass available twice a month to St. Henry. It was not until the C.P.P.S. established Himmelgarten Convent west of St. Henry in 1852 that priests were available for Sunday Mass. With a parish population of 41 families, a larger church was needed, so a new brick church was built just behind the present cluster office and dedicated in 1855. St. Henry's third and present church in Gothic Revival style was dedicated in 1897, which at the time served 144 families.

Major changes came to the parish and church in the 1970's when the entire interior of the church was renovated in response to liturgical reforms initiated by Vatican Council II. In 2004 St. Henry Parish joined with four area parishes to become the St. Henry Cluster. The membership of the St. Henry Parish continues to grow, and in 2014 numbers about 950 households with over 3200 parishioners. The parish has held numerous events in celebration of its anniversary, all culminating to an anniversary mass to be presided by Bishop Binzer on July 13th.



**St. Henry Church,
1897**

St. Joseph Church, Wapakoneta Celebrating 175 Years **By: Rachel Barber**

After the forced removal of the Shawnee from the lands at Wapakoneta in 1832, a new village was platted here in January 1833. In the same year a German-Catholic immigrant named John Ruppert purchased a half section of land in Pusheta Township, south of the fledgling settlement. In 1836 a log church and parsonage were built on this land. Serving the German settlers in the area, the church was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. By 1839, however, Wapakoneta residents had established their own parish, which they called St. Joseph.

The Catholics at Petersburg were first served by Father Johann Wilhelm Horstmann, who was himself an immigrant from Germany. When St. Joseph was established as a separate parish, Father Horstman continued to minister here. Although the congregations at Wapakoneta, Petersburg, and throughout much of west-central Ohio would meet weekly, an itinerant priest might be present to celebrate Mass just once a month, since he served such a wide geographical area.

C.W. Williamson writes about these Catholic pioneers in his *History of Auglaize County* (1905): "Those years were comparatively ignorant times, when prejudice was strong and it required an effort that the present generation can hardly appreciate to keep the light of faith burning in the hearts of the people. Nothing but the most indomitable courage, perseverance, and love of God and their church could have brought them out triumphant over the obstacles that rose in the way of every step."

Many milestones have since transpired since St. Joseph's challenging first steps. The St. Joseph School was established in 1853 and closed in 2010 after 160 years of service. In 1910 the 1858 church was demolished to make room for a new building, with almost double the seating capacity. A new convent was built on Benton Street, as the previous one was actually attached to the 1858 church. In 1911 St. Joseph Church was dedicated after construction was complete.

Continued from page 3... St. Joseph then became one of the Petersburg Parishes in 2009, in conjunction with Immaculate Conception (Botkins) and St. Lawrence (Rhine), which had also emerged from the original Petersburg settlement. The name is a tribute to the historic origins of the three parishes. St. John the Evangelist, Fryburg, will join the pastoral region in July 2014.

In 2013 the church underwent a major interior renovation, with parishioners worshipping in the Parish Life Center from mid-May until the 3rd Sunday of Advent. Today, the church serves a total of 2,767 parishioners and is celebrating the 175th anniversary of its founding with a year's worth of events, including exhibits, concerts, lectures by historians and distinguished sons and daughters of the parish. Archbishop Schnurr will join the people of God at St. Joseph Catholic Church for an anniversary Mass on April 27 at 3:30 p.m.



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***Immaculate Conception, Celina Celebrating 150 Years* By: Charles Mescher**

From its unassuming origins in 1864 to the thriving parish it is today IC 's journey has been one of growth in faith, service, and tradition.

The first Catholic resident of Celina was Owen Gallagher who lived in the city in 1860. He was joined over the next few years by other Catholic families and gradually the small congregation grew so that the first Catholic mass was held in the home of Joseph Zender in 1864. Thus the parish was born. As the congregation grew it was decided to erect a house of worship, and on August 3, 1864, the cornerstone of the first Catholic church in Celina was laid by Archbishop Joseph Purcell. In spite of several additions, the original building soon became too small for the growing congregation, and plans were inaugurated for a new and larger building to be built. The construction began in 1900 and by May 12, 1901, enough progress had been made to lay the cornerstone. The church was dedicated just over two years later in June 1903. The imposing structure still stands on the corner of Walnut and Anthony Streets in Celina, and currently is the house of worship for nearly 1,400 families. Other parish building were added over the years including several schools and a rectory.

But a parish is more than a collection of its buildings. It is a congregation of worshippers growing in the Catholic faith. The first baptism of record for the parish was on July 24, 1864 when Fr. Bernard Dickman baptized August Haeker, and fifteen months later, on October 16, 1865, Fr. Joseph Dwenger officiated at the parish's first marriage, that of Michael Hein and Mary Matuch. From the celebration of those first sacraments came great things. In 2013, IC celebrated 11 marriages, 33 infant baptisms, 48 confirmations, and 41 First Communions, and registered 34 new families. The social, religious, and communal activities of the parish continue to grow as well. Active organizations at IC support both foreign and domestic missions, educate children in their faith, serve the needy, console the grieving, and give comfort to the sick and elderly. In a nut shell, IC is a parish dedicated to living God's kingdom here on earth.

Activities celebrating the parish's anniversary are still being planned, but the six-month long celebration will kick off with an anniversary mass at noon on Sunday, June 22, followed by a parish-wide social gathering. Bishop Joe Binzer will conclude the anniversary with a Mass on December 7.

What started as a flicker of faith among a handful of families 150 years ago has burned brighter and brighter, so that Immaculate Conception now stands as a beacon of our Catholic Church, guiding the faithful to Jesus Christ.

Springtime is a season of optimism and hope and the Christian lives a faith centered on hope. Winter, with its cold and dark days has gone just as Good Friday has passed to Easter and beyond. We live a resurrection life reflected in the new life springing up around us. Thank you, Lord for the hope... and renewal that you bring both to this world and to our hearts...



An excerpt from Pope Francis' Angelus Message on July 21, 2013:

“In our Christian life...prayer and action are always profoundly united. Prayer that does not lead to concrete action toward a brother who is poor, sick, in need of help, the brother in difficulty, is a sterile and incomplete prayer. But, in the same way, when in ecclesial service we are only concerned with doing, we give greater weight to things, functions, structures, and we forget the centrality of Christ, we do not set aside time for dialogue with him in prayer, we are in risk of serving ourselves and not God present in our needy brother... It is from contemplation, from a strong relationship of friendship with the Lord that there is borne in us the capacity to live and bear God's love, his mercy, his tenderness to others.”

Aspiring Musical Talent

By: Katie Eilerman

Divine providence undoubtedly influenced the life of Jared Post, who many would refer to as the young musical prodigy of our area. As a fifth grader, Jared asked his mom for organ lessons but she was hesitant and did not pursue the matter. One day an accidental misdial on the telephone to Jared's home by a local organist showed this aspiration to learn the organ was meant to be. Jared, now a junior at St. Henry High School, currently serves as the organist for St. Rose and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Churches, both of the Marion Catholic Community.

Jared's musical journey began when his parents bought a piano with the intent that their daughter, Riley, would take an interest in it. It was Jared, however, who was intrigued. He started taking piano lessons in the second grade and continued until the ninth grade.

Meanwhile, he began organ lessons in the fifth grade from Denny Brackman, then organist at St. Bernards, Burkettsville. Jared became inspired to play the organ by listening to Denny play after mass. He was especially intrigued by the organ's dynamic contrast of sounds. Jared continues to take lessons every week from Ron Johnson, who is the organist at Holy Trinity, Coldwater.

The rest is history as they say. After beginning lessons, Jared quickly took off on the organ and began subbing as an organist at various parishes. One month prior to his sixteenth birthday, Jared started his job with the Marion Catholic Community. Due to his age, his parents had to drive him to all of the masses he first played. Through this involvement with parishes and the mass, Jared has learned priest cues and how to find appropriate music for the liturgy.

Jared has a very busy schedule with his music ministries, school and friends. During the week he plays two 7:30 am masses before school and then two masses on the weekend. In addition, he often plays at weddings. Jared also plays the tuba in the high school band and recently accompanied the high school choir to New York as their pianist. Every week Jared gives piano lessons to nine students ranging from the first grade to eighth grade. This experience has taught him patience and the understanding that everyone learns in a different manner. He has learned how to teach with varying styles in order to cater to each of his students.

Jared recently completed the American Guild of Organists Level One Test in conjunction with the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. This certifies that Jared is able to play at Roman Catholic Masses. In order to pass this certification, he played repitior, hymns and choir anthems and sight read.

Being a young organist has pushed Jared to be the best person he can be. His advice for anyone trying to learn a musical instrument is: “Keep trying and do not get frustrated. All work is null and void if you become frustrated.” While Jared would like to pursue music in college, his future plans are currently undecided. Whatever his future educational path may hold, he plans to continue playing the organ and being involved in music.



Jared Post, local organist

Saint Charles Senior Living Community

By: Sister Martha Bertke, C.P.P.S.

As I begin to write this article, we just completed “**Artistry Under the Dome**”, an Art Fair at Saint Charles Senior Living Community. It was a wonderful gathering of artists from Mercer and Auglaize counties as well as art work from six local high schools. What a fine event for our area! We were very pleased with the many people who attended as well as the fine compliments we received.



A very special Thank You to all the artists, the planning committee, the numerous volunteers plus the residents, staff members and employees who worked together to make it a great experience. We certainly want to express many thanks to each person who helped in any way to make this a tremendously positive event. While this event was a lot of work, I felt very excited and fulfilled to see people gather together for something good. I am always very grateful to God because in planning events, I pray a lot and trust in the goodness of God. My heart is grateful!



When I think of the season of Spring, I take delight in new life that is made visible in a myriad of ways. Little growing things start sticking their heads out of the ground. How can one refrain from smiling when the temperatures are warmer, the days are brighter, and leaves on trees are rapidly appearing. At Saint Charles there are signs of spring all around us and we become aware of the sacredness of creation.

For more information about Saint Charles Senior Living Community, call 419-925-4516 ext 112, e-mail: smbertke@bright.net or go to www.saintcharlesseniorliving.com.