



ST. MARYS DEANERY  
Catholic Parishes of Mercer & Auglaize Counties



# Northern Lights

Winter 2015—Volume 62

*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

Dear brothers and sisters of the St. Marys Deanery,

At an October Mass celebrating the beatification of Pope Paul VI, Pope Francis spoke about God's transformative presence in the life of faith. In the pope's words....

*God is not afraid of new things! That is why he is continually surprising us, opening our hearts and guiding us in unexpected ways. He renews us: he constantly makes us "new". A Christian who lives the Gospel is "God's newness" in the Church and in the world. How much God loves this "newness"!*

By "surprising us" and "making us new," I don't think the pope means to say that God is out to suddenly start over with his creation. Rather, God continually re-creates our lives—and the life of the world—so that there might be a deeper and more pervasive presence of his kingdom.

I hope that in these pages of The Northern Lights, you will learn of the signs of God's renewal taking place in the St. Marys Deanery. As my four-year term as Dean of the St. Marys Deanery expires at the end of December 2014, I want to express my gratitude for the support of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, the archdiocesan priests and deacons of the deanery, and the many lay men and women who have contributed their time and talents to the religious landscape of our area. In a special way, I want to thank Becky Kunkler and her predecessors Katie Eilerman and Tess Mescher for their dedicated service as Directors of the St. Marys Deanery Center. Their care and concern for the spiritual well-being of our people has been felt by so many.

Let us remember one another in prayer as new—and gracious—things happen in 2015.

*Fr. Tom Mannebach*



*"JOY" is prayer-JOY is strength - JOY is love - JOY is a net of love by which you can catch souls. A joyful heart is the inevitable result of a heart burning with love."*

- Mother Teresa

## Spiritual Center of Maria Stein

By: Robin Goettemoeller

The Spiritual Center of Maria Stein has been busy planning many diverse and faith filled activities for 2015. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, couples are invited to attend "An Evening to Celebrate Marriage". March 1<sup>st</sup> marks the date of our annual Volunteer Dinner and on March 2<sup>nd</sup> area Youth Ministers are encouraged to attend "Living the Beatitudes in Your Life & Ministry" with retreat master Fr. Nathan Cromly. On March 8<sup>th</sup> area high school students are invited to "Cast Your Nets", a high energy rally including workshops, prayer, speakers, music, food, and fun! March events close out with an RCIA Retreat on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Back by popular demand, April starts off with another "Prayer, Wine, and Canvas" on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Start Spring off refreshed with our "Spring Day of Reflection" featuring Fr. Al Naseman and Fr. Jim Dugal, C.P.P.S. on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. April then closes out with "Spiritual Survivor" for junior high youth on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. These are just a few of the highlighted events at the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein! Please visit our website at [www.spiritualcenter.net](http://www.spiritualcenter.net), like our page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to keep up with the ever changing schedule! For questions or to register for an event call 419-925-7625.

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## From the Desk of the Director      By: Becky Kunkler

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Hello! My name is Becky Kunkler, and I am the new Director of the St. Marys Deanery. I am a graduate of Edison State Community College where I received an Associates Degree in Applied Science in Early Childhood and Preschool Education. I also serve as the Coordinator of Religious Education at St. Sebastian Parish, St. Sebastian.

On a personal note, I live in St. Sebastian/MCC with my wonderful husband of 22 years, Henry Kunkler. Together we have 3 boys, of which keep us very busy. Our oldest son, Henry Jacob is 18 and will be heading off to college in the fall. Cody, our middle son is 13, confident and fun-loving. Our youngest is Luke at age 8 is very energetic and spirit-minded. We thank GOD everyday for all our Blessings!! My parents are Ed and Rosie McClurg from St. Sebastian/MCC and my In-laws are Henry and Ruth Kunkler from Burkettsville/SHC.

For fun, I enjoy spending quality time with family and friends. Football, baseball and school events keep us super busy! However, when I find that quiet time, I prefer to read inspirational books, get my hands dirty in the soil planting flowers around our home and garden. I sometimes find myself decorating our home and extending that out to family and friends. Doing a little floral arranging and crafting also gives me a sense of calm. Again, I thank God everyday for his gifts.

My role as director of the St. Marys Deanery is to serve all the parishes of the Mercer and Auglaize counties. This service includes: creating, coordinating and promoting training programs and faith-enriched events, providing a center for deanery activities as well as promoting communication and collaboration among parishes, religious organizations and the Archdiocese. In other words, I am here to assist in your journey of faith by making resources and opportunities available to you.

I look forward to working with all of you!! I would also like to wish Katie well on her journey with her growing family. Feel free to contact me at [smdeanery@bright.net](mailto:smdeanery@bright.net) or 419-925-5022 for questions or any welcomed suggestions. My office is located within St. Charles and normal office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 9am-2pm

*The LORD is kind and shows mercy. He does not become angry quickly but is full of love.  
The LORD is good to everyone; he is merciful to all he has made.*

*Psalms 145:8-9*

# Deanery Center Digest

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**The St. Marys Deanery Center has joined Facebook!** Be sure to "Like Us" to have access to religious news, learn about area events and engage in conversation with fellow parishioners of the St. Marys Deanery!

**Visit: [www.facebook.com/StMarysDeanery](http://www.facebook.com/StMarysDeanery)**



**Our website has been remodeled and revitalized!** Please check out the newly redesigned St. Marys Deanery website to find parish mass and confession times as well as links to parish websites and area religious organizations. Find your parish's Deanery Center Board representative, electronic versions of the Northern Lights Newsletter, information on upcoming events and many great resources to enrich your faith!

## St. Augustine Welcomes New Youth Minister By: Barb Blanco Forwarded by: Becky Kunkler

### Focused on the Future – Youth Ministry for Every Age

St. Augustine/St. Joseph Parish Cluster in Minster is enjoying many exciting changes this year, one of which is the appointment of our new Youth Minister. Join us in welcoming Alex Clune! Alex was born and raised in Minster. He's currently residing with his parents, Alan and Teresa, and younger sister Tara, and is engaged to be married to his fiancé Megan McClurg, of New Bremen, in the summer of 2015. He attended Minster Local Schools and graduated in the class of 2010. He was an avid swimmer and enjoyed coaching summer swim league.

Subsequently he attended Bowling Green and earned a Bachelors' Degree in Science Education, with concentration on Life and Earth Sciences. While attending BGSU, Alex was an active member in the parish campus, St. Thomas More. It was during his experience in campus ministry where he met several young, vibrant, enthusiastic Catholics that helped form his faith. He was especially inspired by their virtuous model and hopes to transmit that same spirit to the students he works with in various youth ministries.



When asked what called him to youth ministry he says, "At that point, I doubt that I would have seriously thought of another ministry job to take, but I look at Minster as my home, and would have looked at St. Augustine being the epitome of my hometown." Upon his graduation, the youth ministry position became available and Alex saw this as an opportunity to reach students outside of the classroom.

Alex began his youth ministry work at St. Augustine/St. Joseph in June 2014, and in a few short months has implemented several youth programs serving grades K-12. For K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades he's developed Friday Kickball. Students are bussed after school to our religious education center for Kickball games and Veggie Tales movies. Each session highlights a Christian virtue which Alex builds upon in subsequent meetings. Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> take part in an adapted version of the LifeTeen middle school Edge Program. Themes for the first half of the school year focused on social justice.

Seventh and eighth grades participate in a bi-weekly bible study adapted for youth ministry with mission outreach activities incorporated. High school ministries include bi-weekly youth meetings, Eucharistic Adoration nights and once a month movie nights. Alex has also been instrumental in assisting students form a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) group.

He kicked off his youth ministry role by organizing a Dodgeball Meet & Greet Social. This fantastic event offered community members of all ages an opportunity to gather for games, food and family fun. Everyone had an opportunity to meet and greet their new youth minister. In addition to the dedicated programs, Alex has incorporated seasonal activities to help build community and reinforce team work. During the summer months and well into the fall, junior and high school students participated in weekly Ultimate Frisbee games. During the Advent and Christmas seasons he hosted a number of events for grade school students.

Alex's energy, enthusiasm and vision are inspiring and contagious. St. Augustine of Hippo once said, "Pray as though everything depends on God. Work as though everything depends on you." Alex lives these words daily by his unflinching dedication and incredible work ethic. St. Augustine parish has put together a team of passionate religious education specialists to help meet the needs of the community and support Alex in realizing his vision. Team members work together bridging religious education and youth ministry by creating genuine faith experiences that intersect and build upon one another. Alex is constructing a strong youth ministry foundation that ministers to students of all ages. The New Evangelization calls us all to "re-propose the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith." The crisis of faith is being experienced by Christians of all ages. The New Evangelization mission invites us to re-evaluate, adapt and reconquer what rightly belongs to the King of Glory, Our Savior Jesus Christ.



## Snapshots of the Shrine

By: Diana Russell

*If you need a place to celebrate your faith with family and friends, or just need a little get away,*

*The Maria Stein Shrine is a place of Peace, Prayer and Hospitality . . .*

*. . . oh what a holy place and so close to home to many of us*



Relic Chapel



Pilgrim Gift Shop



Adoration Chapel



Special Programs

There are over 1000 relics in the **Relic Chapel**. The **Adoration Chapel** has exposition of the Blessed Sacrament three days a week – come visit. The **Heritage Museum** will be undergoing a major renovation; we invite you to enjoy the Museum again in late June, 2015. The **Pilgrim Gift Shop** has a generous selection of gifts for all life events. You can shop close to home to find meaningful gifts and keepsakes. Hours are Mon -Thurs 9:30-6 PM, Fri & Sat 9:30- 4 PM and Sun. Noon-4 PM Join us on facebook for information about the 2015 **Special Programs** going on at the Shrine. Stay tuned for Anne McGuire's "Armchair Pilgrimage" to the Holy Land on February 3, 2015 at the Shrine.

Did you know?... The annual "March For Life" in Washington D.C. will be held on January 22, 2015. Information for the march can be found by visiting:  
[www.marchforlife.org](http://www.marchforlife.org)

## The Prophecy of a Saint...

By: Becky Kunkler

*Gathered in St. Sebastian Catholic Church were Saint Thomas, St. Luke, Saint Rose, St. Peter and St. Elizabeth. In celebration of All Saints Day, these 7th and 8th grade students portrayed the life of their favorite saints. The 5 students prepared a speech about the life of their saint and shared what they had learned with the first through fourth grade classes. It was in agreement by all students, that by doing this activity, they learned a lot about the individual saints.*

*Do we realize that God wants us to be saints? Let us embrace our crosses, big or small as they may be, and let us become one!*

*"Don't Be Afraid To Become A Saint!"*



## Holy Humor

By: Becky Kunkler

On a very cold, snowy Sunday in February, only the pastor and one farmer arrived at the church. The pastor said, "Well, I guess we won't have a service today."

The farmer replied: "Heck, if even only one cow shows up at feeding-time, I feed it."

The pastor obliged and did the entire service. As the farmer was leaving, the pastor shook his hand and said, "How did I do?"

"It was okay." the farmer replied. "But if only one cow shows up at feed-time, I don't drop the full load on it."

-via Ronald E. Leese, Spring Grove, PA

## Missionaries of the Precious Blood Celebrate 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By: Jean Giesige

### Missionaries Celebrate 200 Years of Ministry

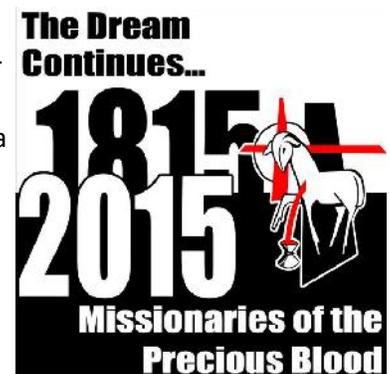
The Missionaries of the Precious Blood (C.P.P.S.), whose priests and brothers minister or have ministered at many parishes in the deanery, will celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their founding in 2015. The jubilee year will be marked by prayer, praise and a public celebration.

The Congregation was founded in 1815 in Italy by St. Gaspar del Bufalo, a Roman-born priest. St. Gaspar dreamed of renewing the Church through the Precious Blood of Jesus. The Missionaries of the Precious Blood first came to the United States in 1844 to minister to German-American settlers in Ohio. They established many parishes in our area, and continue to serve here.

The celebration will culminate on August 15, with an afternoon workshop on mission, an outdoor Mass with Archbishop Dennis Schnurr as presider, and a picnic at St. Charles Center in Carthagena.

"We appreciate the goodness of the people who have shared our history, and who are so much a part of our Congregation," said Fr. Larry Hemmelgarn, C.P.P.S., provincial director of the Cincinnati Province. "We want to include people in our celebration of 200 years."

Missionaries are also organizing blood drives and sponsoring other events to mark the bicentennial. For more information, visit [cpps-preciousblood.org](http://cpps-preciousblood.org).



"When you feel stress coming on, step back for a moment; then take a deep, slow breath and know that the Lord is with you."

"Slowly repeat this brief beautiful prayer: "Jesus,...my strength,...my peace,...my joy!" I promise you that by the tenth or eleventh time you'll be breathing more easily and your heart will relax!"

Fr. Tom Hemm, C.P.P.S.

*SUNDAY AFTER CHURCH, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for coffee and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."*

## Saint Charles Senior Living Community

By: Teresa DiSalvo, Senior Living Manager

Saint Charles Senior Living Community hosted our annual “Sounds of the Season” Advent and Christmas concert on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. We are so very grateful for all of the very talented individuals who came together to make this beautiful presentation a great success. Choirs, directors, and musicians from several local parishes, as well as many volunteers dedicated their time and talents, and we thank each and every one of you. It was truly inspiring to see all of the participants and volunteers come together to assure this event was a success.



Nativity Sets from around the world are currently on display now through January 4<sup>th</sup>. These very special sets come to St. Charles to be displayed from the University of Dayton. We hope that everyone who comes to see all of the nativity sets are inspired to continue to reflect on the mystery of the birth of Jesus, and reminded of how we are all connected with other people all over the world.

Although both of these events are planned and focused around this very special time of year to acknowledge the most amazing gift and reason for the season, the birth of Jesus, I found myself reflecting on a quote from Mother Teresa. I share that quote here: “It is Christmas time every time you let God love others through you...yes, it is Christmas every time you smile at your brother and offer him your hand.” This beautiful message is such an encouragement and reminder to each of us to demonstrate and live with the love and purpose of this beautiful season in each day of our lives through out the year.

I am so very grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of the daily life of people who live at St. Charles. It has certainly been a privilege for me to witness the demonstration of Christmas being a true part of the daily life of the residents living here at St. Charles Senior Living Community. If you are 55 years of age or older, and desire to live at an independent Senior Living Community like St. Charles, please come and visit us, call for more information, or set up an appointment for a tour at 419-925-4516, ext 112, or email [teresad@bright.net](mailto:teresad@bright.net).