

**PARISH AFFAIRS**  
**MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2007**

-Father Sweeny opened meeting with a prayer.

-Bill Hall lead with individual introductions.

**Stewardship**:(Sue Gordon)- As a committee, it was decided that our Donut Sundays in April and October are actually mini-Stewardship Fairs since our Ministry Leaders and Members are so good about participating in the Donut Sundays with their ministry posters and displays. Our next Donut Sunday is being scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup>. We ask all Ministry Leaders to prepare their tri-fold posters and ready their tables for this important event. This is a terrific time to “showcase” your ministry and welcome new members of our parish family.

Thanks to a Church Ministry Institute project done by Parishioner, Mary Farren, we hosted an evening of **Sharing the Wealth** with local parishes on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Letters were mailed to area pastors inviting them to an evening of sharing the different ministries available in our parishes in the hopes that we can help one another with new programs, or offer to others the ministries already present in a particular parish. We had representatives come from St. Mary’s in Schwenksville, Sacred Heart in Royersford, St. Gabriel’s in Stowe, and St. Aloysius in Pottstown. This was a very fruitful evening and we hope to hold similar sessions a few times a year meeting in different parishes.

**Stewardship Retreat**:(Sue Gordon)- Recently, Jack Hasson and Sandy MacMurtrie spoke at all of the Masses inviting the people to come to our retreat with Fr. Cooke on March 23<sup>rd</sup> following Stations of the Cross, and Christopher West coming on March 24<sup>th</sup> to speak to us about John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body”. Please plan to attend! The cost is \$20.00 for adults and \$15.00 for students. The cost includes workbook and lunch. We did mail out letters this week which were personal invitations from Fr. Cooke with registration forms attached for this weekend event to all of the engaged couples and those having their marriages con-validated throughout 2007 and 2008 offering them free of charge entry to our Retreat.

**Irish Concert**:(Sue Gordon)- The Irish Concert with Charlie Zahm was a great success as always. We have invited Charlie Zahm to come again next year on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Katrina Gifts**:(Sue Gordon)- Thanks to the efforts of new parishioners, Jack and Peggy Firely, our efforts to aid the students of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Long Beach, Mississippi at Christmas time, made the February 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the Times Herald Newspaper. The children from St. Vincent de Paul Elementary School (school at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish) recently mailed us more “thank you” cards which were sent down to school so that our students and teachers could view them. Also, a thank you letter was sent to our parish by Fr. Louis Lohan, the Pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish. In his letter he mentioned how much he appreciated the boxes and boxes of Christmas gifts delivered to them, and how delighted he was to have the parish of St. Eleanor as their parish partner as they continue to recover from Hurricane Katrina. “Even though many of our families lost their homes or have homes that are severely damaged, the loudest cry I hear is ‘give us back our church.’” He also mentions that they celebrated their final Mass in the shell of their destroyed church. Big equipment came during January to demolish the shell which represented the first visible sign of rebuilding. They are presently gathering to make decisions that will result in a beautiful place of worship rising from the “rubble of Katrina”. Fr. Lohan asks that we keep their parish in our prayers, as they continue to struggle to return to some normalcy as a parish!

**Community Lenten Service “The Promise of Mercy”**:(Sue Gordon)- There will be a community Lenten Service at St. Eleanor Church entitled “*The Promise of Mercy*” on Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> in our Chapel at 7:30 PM with the Rev. Dr. Martha Kriebel (Trinity United Church of Christ) as preacher. All are invited to attend.

**Dedication of Our Lady of Guadalupe Statue**:(Sue Gordon)- There will be a dedication of our new Our Lady of Guadalupe statue on Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of the 7:00 PM Mass. The statue will stand in the Narthex near the entrance to Our Lady’s Chapel.

**Consecration to Jesus through Mary according to St. Louis Marie de Montfort:** (Sue Gordon)- Fr. Cooke directed a program with talks each Sunday at 1:00 for about a month. This program will hold a consecration Mass on Monday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 in the Chapel. The participants continue on with daily prayer asking Our Lady to bring them ever closer to her Son, Jesus Christ.

**Safe Environment:**(Sue Gordon)- Just a reminder, the next “Protecting God’s Children” class will take place in Vianney Hall on Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. I.D. photos for badges will also be taken that day.

**Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Washington DC:**(Sue Gordon)- A date to remember is Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> when there will be an Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC. Father Sweeney is chartering a bus for St. Eleanor parishioners who would like to go. The cost for the bus will be \$15.00 per person. Call the Rectory if you would like to attend.

**Prayer Wheel For Priests:** (Betty Rowlands)- Our priests and deacons are prayed for on a rotating basis each month in the order listed on the cover of our church Bulletin. Each person is assigned a day of the week to pray, so that all 7 days of the week are covered. Numbers of participants on the Prayer Wheel continues to grow. We now have 28 people praying for a deacon or priest each month.

**For the Perkiomen Valley Knights of Columbus:** (Joseph Bondi)- The Knights will be collecting donations for the PA ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens) April and May at area supermarkets. Exact dates are not fixed but in the past, we have collected 3-4 days at Acme, Redner’s and Landis markets during this period. Fr. Sweeney has requested that a Parish Roundtable be formed with Knights who belong to St. Eleanor. (note the Council presently represents St. Mary’s and Blessed Teresa parishes in addition to St. Eleanor). A list of Knights will be presented to Fr. Sweeney shortly and he will be able to use this list to convene meetings with parish members to discuss projects he may have in mind requiring their input.

**Project Hope:** (Jennifer Daywalt)- We schedule rides for local doctor appointments for people in need of transportation. If you would like to be on the volunteer list or know anyone who would be interested to give local rides, please call: Jennifer Daywalt 610-831-1571.

**ALPHA:** (Michael/Laura Connor)- We are currently in wk. seven of the ten wk. course. We are offering two courses-one in the daytime with 15 participants and one in the evening with 42 participants. The evening course is split between Alpha Alumni and newcomers. The alumni are taking a “Beta” course called *A Life Worth Living*, which is a video series discussing St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Newcomers are watching and discussing the Alpha Video. Attendance from the alumni is very encouraging. We plan to offer follow-ups similar to this in the future. The Alpha Philadelphia weekend retreat was held at the Desmond Hotel on March 9-10. There were approximately 310 participants from 18 local churches. Confessions were held on March 9<sup>th</sup> and a Catholic Mass was offered at the Desmond after the retreat on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Women’s Guild:** (Mary Kay Linahan)- We held the annual Mother/Daughter Valentine Breakfast in February. It was an enjoyable morning for 300 people in attendance. Funds raised were \$2000. In March, we held the basket bingo on a Friday night this year and had 175 attendees and raised approximately \$2400. We continue our monthly meetings and look forward to our last event for the year that we participate in, the St. Eleanor Faire.

**Cleaning Committee:** (Mary O’Rourke)- Our year-round activities involve cleaning the Church (usually on Monday mornings). The cleaning involves vacuuming, dusting, window cleaning, and complete bathroom cleaning and re-supplying. We have a great crew of about a dozen people. They all get along well and we truly enjoy working together. If we ever are in need of help, a message is placed in the bulletin and we receive a response in just a few days. Sam Sloan is very cooperative in keeping cleaning supplies properly stocked and in repairing any broken items that we may find.

**Contemporary Ensemble:** (Joette Giorgis)- The Contemporary Ensemble provides music for the 9 AM Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. We will also be doing the music for the 3 PM service on Good Friday and the 2 PM Confirmation Mass. We are no longer able to do the third Saturday Mass of the month. Our numbers have been

stretched thin since some of our members began doing the Sunday 7 PM Mass. We are looking for new people to join us for the Sunday 9 AM Mass. We rehearse on Sunday mornings at 7:45 in the chapel and also some Monday evenings. Both teens and adults are welcome to join us. Anyone interested in joining, please call Joette at 610-489-4179.

**Landings:** (Alice Carden)- I'm very happy to say that we started a new Landings session on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Our participants have been away from the Catholic Church for approximately 30 years. Our team members are Pat and Joe Sullivan, Mimi Stachowski, Nidia Klausmam, Chris Malone, Alice Carden and Bob Vitelli. We will meet for the next 7 Mondays and end the session with a special Mass. We periodically run bulletin ads throughout the year and especially at Christmas and Easter time. Please keep Landings in mind if you know of anyone that might benefit from this special Ministry. Word of mouth is the best form of advertisement!

**Pre-Jordan:** There are 4 couples on the team and the class lasts about one and a half hours.

**Bible Study:** We are studying Luke. We have two classes, one on Friday mornings at 10 AM and one on Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM. Both of these classes are poorly attended.

**Girl Scout Ministry:** (Donna Cioffo)- At present time we have six Girl Scout troops from St. Eleanor Parish. There is one troop for each grade level from Kindergarten through fourth grade. In addition, we have an eighth grade troop consisting of five girls. The approximate number of girls in the program is 125-150. There are also some girls from St. Eleanor parish who attend the public schools and are part of non-parish troops. On March 31<sup>st</sup> the Girl Scouts of Freeland Hills Service Unit are planning a park clean up at Central Perkiomen Valley Park off of Plank Road in Schwenksville. Many of our girls will participate in that activity. All of the troops participate in various service projects such as visiting the nursing homes, sending letters to servicemen abroad and basically helping others whenever possible. The older girls are also sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt along with the older girls at St. Mary's Parish in Schwenksville. Basically, the goal of Girl Scouts is to teach girls leadership skills that will enable them to be of service to their communities. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, 610-584-1737.

**Parish Nurse Ministry:** (Nancy Lynn)- The Parish Nurses are conducting a quit smoking class. The class meets on Monday evenings and will run through Lent. We will be doing blood pressure screenings at Donut Sunday.

**Hospitality Committee:** (Nancy Horning)- There are 20 members of the Hospitality Committee. We took lunch for the members of St. Eleanor who were participating in the January build for Habitat for Humanity. We sold tickets at Masses and served refreshments at the March 10<sup>th</sup> Irish Concert. We will be serving breakfast for those attending the Stewardship Retreat this Saturday. We will be hosting a small reception for the RCIA candidates at Holy Saturday Easter Vigil Mass. We will be serving refreshments on Donut Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup> and we would like to again distribute holy cards to mothers after the Masses on Mother's Day. A member of our committee continues to personally call each newly registered member of our parish.

**Music/Cantor:** (Dan Weckerly)- The choir/cantor programs continue their service and coverage, enhancing liturgy and teaching new hymns. Liturgies that were enhanced by their participation included 40 Hours, the Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service and all Christmas liturgies. In addition, the choir presented its fourth Christmas concert. The choir was very grateful to receive new robes and stoles this fall.

**St. Vincent de Paul:** (Mimi Stachowski)- We had a very successful fall food drive. Due to the overwhelming response to our request for assistance, we received more food than our Pantry could hold. We are experimentally implementing a monthly food collection that started on 2/7/07. We will collect on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month. To date, the response to this monthly collection has been very well received. Our cupboard is overflowing. We will hold our Spring Clothing Drive on May 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and our Society Member Induction Mass on April 15<sup>th</sup>. We are happy to say that we were also able to provide two of our clients with cars and one client with a washer/dryer. We are currently assisting approximately 15 families and have 15 Vincentian members. In January, 20 persons were assisted with "in kind" assistance (food delivery), 30 persons were assisted through visits made to client/families,

and 46 service hours were donated by St. Vincent de Paul members. In February 22 persons were assisted with “in kind” assistance (food delivery), 30 persons assisted through visits made to client/families and 45 service hours were donated by St. Vincent de Paul members.

**Elizabeth Ministry:** (Ann Byram)- The Elizabeth ministry continues to meet monthly with 7 core members and several women who help with events as they are able. One new parishioner has inquired about the ministry but has yet to attend a meeting. We have two ongoing ministry programs. Meals to heal has been in existence for 5 years. We have about 70 cooks who rotate cooking for families in need of support. Referrals come from parishioners, the rectory staff, and occasionally Catholic Social Services. Please feel free to contact us if any ministry knows of a family in need. The Baptism gift program has been in existence for five years as well. Each baptized child gets a gift from the parish presented to them on the day of the baptism by volunteers. We held three events this year. Bowling for Fathers and Sons in October, co-coordinated the visit from the St. Gianna Society in January, and are looking forward to the Father/Daughter Dance in May. The dance is being organized with help from a high school student as part of a project to meet graduation requirements. Proceeds from the dance will go to the Jamaican Outreach. Proceeds from the bowling event have been used to help families in need. Script is used as much as possible. The St. Gianna Society is willing to do a presentation for the school and CCD students. I will forward info to Mrs. Ann Hayes. The group has discussed taking a break from the fundraisers in 2007-2008.

**Pre-Cana:** (Lynn Smith-Palombit)- The Spring Pre-Cana session was held last weekend, Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. There were 18 couples in attendance. We have been fortunate to have 3 new couples become active in our ministry over the past few months. We are reviewing the materials available on marriage preparation to determine if we need to change the format and/or focus of our training. In January, the team received an overview of a program titled “God’s Plan for A Joy-Filled Marriage”. This is based on the Christopher West’s “Theology of the Body” program. Fr. Sweeney authorized one of our team couples to attend an information/training session for this program. They have materials that they will share with the rest of the team. Also, a representative from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Family Life Office is scheduled to attend our meeting on Monday, May 14<sup>th</sup> to give a presentation on their vision for a marriage preparation program. The team will review both programs and consider what direction our parish program should take for the future. The Fall Pre-Cana Session will be held on Friday, October 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. We meet regularly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month in Vianney Hall. Our next meeting will be on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Liturgy Committee:** The mission of the Liturgy Committee is to support and promote the spiritual development of the worshipping community by fostering spiritual growth through the celebration of life-giving liturgies and celebrating the diversity and unity of the parish community. The Liturgy Committee is concerned with the liturgical, sacramental, and devotional life of the parish. The committee is responsible to the pastor, and works with him to: Develop assess and evaluate the vision of liturgy and the sacramental life of the parish; Plan the liturgical and sacramental life of the parish; Implement liturgical planning by the committee and any of its sub-committees; Work collaboratively with other parish committees with regard to the liturgical life of the parish; Provide oversight and assist in the coordination of the liturgical aspects of special parish events such as, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, and special masses for children; Ensure the recruitment, training formation, coordination, communication with and scheduling of liturgical lay ministers; Develop and implement parish-level liturgical policy and implement diocesan and national liturgical policies. The liturgical life of the parish encompasses celebration of Sunday, weekday and holy liturgies. Also, Children’s Liturgies and children’s Liturgy of the Word, funeral masses, weddings, RCIA and special liturgies. The Liturgy Committee in its planning of liturgical events/seasons works with the Director of Music and other representatives from the music department to create coordinated liturgies in which the music enhances and amplifies the readings and special themes of the liturgical year. The committee also encourages the devotional life of the parish, e.g. Eucharist adoration and benediction, the celebration of the Marian solemnities (Mother of God, Assumption, and Immaculate Conception), recitation of the rosary, and Lenten Stations of the Cross.

**Spiffy Club:** (Mary Jane Foley)- In January we celebrated with treats from Hawaii which were provided by our member Franz Knorr’s mom, Freedy. They moved from Hawaii two years ago and the celebration was in honor of Franz’s birthday. February marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Spiffy Club. Each member was given an angel ornament with their name on it. In March our meeting was to be a St. Patrick’s Day party, however,

the weather changed our plans and the meeting was cancelled. The Annual Archdiocesan Mass for Persons with Disabilities is being celebrated on April 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm in the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul. We are hoping that several members and their families will attend. We are working on possibly going to a production of "Psalms of David" at the Living Water Theatre in Lancaster for our May outing. The Bazaar at Camilla Hall has been postponed until October- that was our May outing in the past.

**Habitat for Humanity:** (Dolores Eichelberger)- We had our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual January "big build" with 20 St. Eleanor builders working on a home in Norristown. The Hospitality committee graciously served lunch for everyone. On March 6<sup>th</sup> we had our Assumption College and Boston College builds. 25 students from both colleges gave up their spring break to help restore homes in Pottstown and in Norristown. Lunches were provided by the following St. Eleanor Volunteers: Diane Shatner, Susan Kegerise, Kristen McVey, and Virginia Dougherty. Two home dedications were held in February: 554 Walnut Street, Pottstown and 624 Moore Street in Norristown. Our goals for 2007 are to continue to offer two big builds of 20 people each year as well as have smaller builds of 10 or less. Don Burnes continues to represent us at monthly meetings of the Steering Committee in Pottstown held at Trinity Church. Jack Heelan continues to head the Building Committee.

**Divine Mercy Parish:** (Dolores Eichelberger)- We gave our old choir robes to Divine Mercy as they did not have any.

**Jamaica Outreach:** (Dolores Eichelberger)- For 2007 we hope to find an organization willing to contribute \$300-400 to purchase Lives of the Saints books depicting black saints.

**Evangelization Committee:** (Dolores Eichelberger)- Adult Faith Series takes place on Tuesday evenings from 6:35-7:35 pm in Vianney or Guadalupe Hall. We have had approximately 20 talks presented to date. The Evangelization Committee meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month to discuss opportunities we may offer to strengthen one's Catholic faith and bring community to our church. The Holy Eucharist, the Blessed Mother and the Sacraments are the foundations of our faith that we are committed to presenting to our parish in new programs. In conjunction with the Liturgy Committee we placed surveys provided by Sr. Louise Alf of the Archdiocese Evangelization Committee in the pews on Ash Wednesday. Results were: 5 people interested in joining the church and 14 people asking for specific prayers. Prayer requests were given to Irene Buffardi's prayer group and individuals were phoned by Deacon Deriva if they added their names, phone numbers and some provided their website. Those names wanting to join the church were given to Kathy Coscia and Gene Phillips. I, Sue and Charlie Gordon attended the Charlie Zanzig presentation on reaching out to adult faith communities held at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. We are in the process of reviewing materials to apply them to our Church ministry. We also would like to meet with the Church Ministry Institute members of St. Peter and Paul's Parish in Andora. This church is interested in creating an Evangelization Committee and met with our team as well as with Susan Gordon. Visitors are members of a Church Ministry Institute class and are interested in bringing an evangelization program to their church. Our goals for 2007 are to continue with Adult Faith Programs held on Tuesday evenings

**Faire Committee:** Our carnival/Faire has been serving our Parish community for 13 years now. The concept of our "Community Faire" needs to be brought to the fore again. We *need* all of our Parish organizations to get involved. We *do not* need you to attend monthly meetings or assist in the planning. We need volunteers to "Work" the nights of the faire in specific functions. Individuals or small groups from your organization spend the three nights at the Faire as friends who enjoy working together. We are asking each organization to take responsibility for staffing one food, game or activity booth. The dates for this fun Faire will be June 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2007 from 5:30-10 PM. Please give Carla Grimm a call or email: 610-539-2528 ([cgrimm@southco.com](mailto:cgrimm@southco.com)) by April 15<sup>th</sup>, to let us know how you or your group can help. Thanks you and we look forward to you joining us.

**St. Eleanor Cub Scouts:** (Vince DiDonato)- Our February Pack meeting was held on Scout Sunday to celebrate the awarding of religious medals to the scouts who fulfilled their requirements. Mr. Chuck Eaton from the Cradle of Liberty Council engaged the boys and the parents in some scouting camaraderie and fun. Scout Sunday Mass was held on February 18<sup>th</sup> at the 9:00 AM Mass. Fr. Cooke was the celebrant. Our Wolves and Webelos who earned religious medals were presented with those medals by Fr. Cooke. Four *Parvuli Dei Religious Emblems* were awarded to the Webelo Scouts and eleven *Light of Christ Religious Emblems* to Bear Scouts. Fr. Cooke met with

and approved each scout to receive these emblems. The Pine Wood Derby was held in January in Campion Hall with everyone having a great time! We will host our Blue & Gold party on March 31<sup>st</sup> in Campion Hall and in May the pack will venture to the Battleship New Jersey where scouts and family will spend the night aboard the battleship. Summer camp will take place in July at Musser Scout Reservation in Green Lane. Troop 231 at Sacred Heart in Royersford has invited Pack 707 to an April trip to our nation's capital, along with Pack 231 Cub Scouts. Leaving Friday evening from Sacred Heart in Royersford, we will tour Washington DC during Saturday and attend Mass at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Washington on Saturday. On Sunday we will tour the National Air and Space Museum's Dulles center. Troop 231 has prepared a detailed itinerary and packing list for our scouts. The Pack leadership is examining ways to publicize the Pack to the parish family. We are also exploring ways to reach out to the St. Eleanor's PREP population directly, in an effort to publicize the Pack to these boys and their families as well as to extend an initiation to join our pack.

**Ministry of Lectors:** (Chuck Kane)- The Ministry of Lector is a wonderful work. Through you, God's living Word continues to be proclaimed to his people, to the young and old, the troubled, the hopeless, the happy, the content, to those in need of challenge, and to those in need of comfort. Your task is like that of the sower who generously casts the seed on the earth; perhaps only a few seeds will take root at any one time, but that is certainly something. Over the past 30 years, our understanding of the requirements for the Ministers of the Word has changed dramatically. At one time, the ability to read - or even the willingness to stand up in front of the congregation - were considered qualification enough. Today, it is far more complicated. Liturgy Directors everywhere struggle to find a balance...seeking, on one hand to enhance the congregation's experience of the Word and, at the same time, to help individual volunteers answer a call in their personal faith journey. In becoming a lector, you are accepting the responsibility to do your best, to practice, to make frequent self-evaluation, and to continually look for ways by which to improve. Training is available. The amount and degree depends on the needs of the individual. Training consists of working with the microphone and the Lectionary, as well as practice sessions in Church under the tutelage of a person who trained as a Lector at the Archdiocese. *Workbook for Lector*, includes commentary on how to enhance the Readings. Frequency of reading at Mass depends on the number of Lectors on the schedule. Currently, we have approximately 50 Lectors. This means that one would be scheduled to read once each 4 to 5 weeks. We are especially in need of Lectors at the 7:30 AM and the 7:00 PM Masses on Sunday. Husbands and wives are encouraged to sign up together. Please call the rectory, or contact Chuck Kane at 610-489-7088.

**Ecumenical Prayer Fellowship:** (Aurora Gunn)- This ministry began on February 16, 2007. I had been assigned to meet with the Church Women United Ecumenical Council through St. Eleanor parish. On March 2, 2007, Church Women United held their World Day of Prayer Service at St. James Church in Limerick. Elder Sandy Koenig, whom I have invited to be on the Ecumenical Council at St. Eleanor, was inspired to print-out steering committee questionnaires to be handed out after the prayer service on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The women and a handful of men, formed groups and a leader was assigned to each group. They formulated their responses and shared with all those in attendance. Only positive feed-back was given with Holy Spirit led suggestions as to where all this could lead. As of now, we are four women in intercessory prayer, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. We will reconvene on March 27<sup>th</sup> at the Trinity Church in Collegeville to discuss the data received and all other matters related to the council.

-Ended with a closing prayer from Fr. Sweeney.