

Under the Steeple

ST. JAMES PARISH



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Fr. Ron's Passing & Memorial	2
Our 175 th Anniversary	2
Parish Priest Son, Fr. Bill	3
On Mission Magazine	3
The Newest Musicians	4
Welcoming the Little Ones	4
True Purpose of a Parish	5
Special Projects Update	5

PREPARING YOUR HEART: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION IN ADVENT

Advent is a season of joyful anticipation and spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. As we await the celebration of the birth of Christ, it's an opportune time to reflect on our spiritual journey. One powerful way to do this is through the Sacrament of Confession. In this article, we'll explore the importance of this sacrament during the Advent season and how it can help us draw closer to the true meaning of Christmas.

Advent: A Season of Preparation

Advent is a period of four weeks that symbolizes the spiritual journey of the faithful. It is a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, not only in His historical birth but also in anticipation of His return.

Repentance and Renewal

One of the key themes of Advent is the

call to repentance and conversion. It is a time for self-examination, acknowledging our need for God's forgiveness, and making amends for our shortcomings. The Sacrament of Confession, also known as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, plays a vital role in this process.

The Significance of Confession in Advent

1. Clearing the Path: Confession allows us to clear away the spiritual clutter and baggage that can accumulate over time. Advent calls us to prepare the way for the Lord, and confession helps us to remove the obstacles that hinder His presence in our lives.

2. Renewed Relationship with God: Confession is a means of reconciling with

Continued on page 4



Dinner & Dance

Saturday, February 24, 2024
Gatherings 43, Denmark

Preparations are underway for our fourth annual Dinner & Dance for St. James Parish. Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 24, 2024 at Gatherings 43 in Denmark. Like other years we are featuring a chicken and Swedish meatball dinner followed by Mark Jirikovec band entertaining us, and Bill Jartz as emcee for the live auction. There is also a silent auction, 50/50 drawings, a gun raffle, bucket raffles, a wine raffle and more.

Please consider making a donation for the live auction, silent auction or bucket raffles. We value the one-of-a-kind handcrafted items, or certificates for merchandise or services you can pro-

vide. Bottles of wine are also needed for the wine raffle. Finally, cash donations of any amount help to defray expenses and contribute to a successful evening. Monetary donations may be made by check in the collection basket, by mail to St. James office, or by credit card on our website. All donations are very much appreciated.

Dinner tickets cost \$25.00 and will be for sale in January. Admission after dinner is \$10.00.

Many volunteers are needed before and during the event. Please contact Dawn Rabas, chairperson at 920-680-0660, or send an email to: dawn@stjamescooperstown.org to offer your help.



FATHER RON'S PASSING & MEMORIAL

By Jean Schleis



With faith in the Resurrection of Jesus, we offer our prayers for Reverend Ronald A. Colombo who entered eternal life on Saturday, September 16, 2023, at the age of 77.

Ronald Allen Colombo was born July 19, 1946, in Sturgeon Bay, WI to the late William Joseph Colombo, Sr. and Marie Jane (Albert) Colombo. He grew up attending Corpus Christi Parish in Sturgeon Bay where he received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. His high school and junior college years were spent at Sacred Heart Seminary in Oneida, WI, and he received his education in philosophy and theology at St. Francis Seminary in St. Francis, WI.

After other diocesan assignments, Fr. Ron came to St. James Parish in Cooperstown as temporary administrator in 1993. Just seven years later in the year 2000, Father Ron added responsibility for All Saints and Holy Trinity Parishes in Denmark, followed by St. Joseph Parish Kellnersville in 2005. St. Mary Glenmore was added to this mix in 2009, and these five parishes came to be known as the "Circle of Faith." He served this linkage of parishes until 2014, when he retired as senior priest.

Upon retiring, Father Ron moved to his hometown of Sturgeon Bay, where he continued to say weekend Masses throughout Door County. He enjoyed time with

his cats, especially Sheba, and watching the squirrels outside of his apartment. He also dealt with severe health issues these past several years.

Father Ron especially loved his 21 years serving the parish communities in the Denmark area and would often describe those years as "some of the best years" of his life.

Please remember Father Ron and his family in your prayers.

MEMORIAL

It has been decided to remember Father Ron at St. James Parish in two ways:

- ▶ Rebuild the deck above the rectory garage in his honor. Fr. Ron loved to sit on the deck when he lived at St. James.
- ▶ After several trees are removed from the church lawn this winter, plant a new one in his memory, creating a prayer garden with a seating bench.

If you wish to contribute to these memorials, place your donation in a clearly marked envelope and put in the collection at Mass or mail to the parish. You may also make an online donation on St. James website.

175 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



Although it may seem early to some, preliminary planning has begun for the observance of St. James Parish founding, 175 years ago in the year 1850. A committee has been formed to plan ways to celebrate this significant occasion and have come up with a couple of initiatives that will involve considerable preparations.

Many of you will remember the celebration of St. James sesquicentennial in the year 2000. At that time, parishioners designed fabric squares representing their family that were quilted to

make two large banners for church.

There was a school reunion with students from the old St. James School and an old-fashioned church picnic. Cookbooks were printed, and a photo directory was published. Souvenir items like caps, mugs and tote bags were offered with the theme, "We Are Family."

This observance of the 175-year milestone will take place from July 2024 until July 2025. Parishioners selected a bible verse at the Annual Meeting on which to center all the other components. The verse is: "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3) While this upcoming celebration may not be as grand as the one in 2000, here are six components that the committee is pursuing:

1. Celebrating an outdoor Mass with brunch to follow

By Jean Schleis

2. Continuing the video recordings of the oldest parishioners
3. Chronicling the parish history alongside other local, state, national and international history
4. Designing a plaque to list all the priests who served St. James since 1850
5. Publishing a book of 175 prayers written by parishioners
6. Establishing a goal to have the parking lot redone by the closing celebration in 2025

It was noted at the committee meetings that there ought to be some younger people in on this planning to carry on when the 200-year bicentennial rolls around. We invite anyone who is interested in getting involved with this committee to contact Jean Schleis at 920-863-3965.

MEET FATHER WILLIAM O'BRIEN, A PARISH SON

By Monica Winnekens



Father William O'Brien, better known as Fr. Bill in the community, is a life-long member of St. James Parish, where he was baptized in the sacristy on Christmas Day in 1942. Fr. Bill was born on December 10th and will be 81

years old soon. In a recent interview, he shared some interesting stories, along with his current diocesan assignment, and community involvement.

On December 15, 1990, Fr. Bill was ordained a Catholic priest by Bishop Robert Morneau at the age of 48. His baptism, first confession, first Eucharist, and confirmation were all held at St. James Parish, as well as his first Mass as a priest on December 16, 1990. Parish assignments included Holy Cross-Kaukauna, Holy Cross-Mishicot, St. Mary's-Brillion, and Two Rivers parishes (where he was founding pastor of St. Peter the Fisherman). Fr. Bill retired in December 2012 as parish priest from the Humboldt, New Franken, and Champion parishes. As a senior priest, he remains very active and is committed to traveling extensively throughout the diocese to assist at weekend masses.

Fr. Bill is also the Regional Vicar for the Peninsula Vicariate in Door and Kewaunee counties. In July 2020, Bishop Ricken appointed him Vicar General for the field. The

title was recently changed to Special Minister to Priests. Bishop Ricken's directive for Fr. Bill is to visit all priests (active, senior status, religious order, and International) of the Diocese in his name. Fr. Santy is a prime example of how blessed our diocese is to have 31 International Priests serving here. Our need for priests is great, and we need families to promote the priesthood.

In addition to religious life, Fr. Bill has been active in the community. He served in the U.S. Army from April 1964 until May 1966 at Fort Hood Post Stockade in Texas. He was the original chairman of the study group that formed the Viking Rescue Squad (now County Rescue) and was town clerk for the Town of Franklin for 10 years.

Fr. Bill donated the land and is the founder of the Curran Community Club, a baseball diamond used by many area adults and little leagues. Another significant highlight is the Curran Spirituality Center that he established in 2014. Daily prayer pilgrims stop there to pray, meditate, and light votive candles in the Devotional Prayer Chapel. On average, 200 of the 5-day votive candles are lit in this chapel every month. This Curran Spirituality Center is serving a much needed spiritual purpose. Feel free to visit the chapel, stop for moments of prayer, light a candle, order a mass intention, pray the stations, visit the Angel of Hope, meditate, pick up literature prepared by Fr. Bill, or spend some quiet time. This is where Fr. Bill begins his day with prayer.

Thank you, Fr. Bill, for your years of service to many parishes, priests, Bishop Ricken, St. James Parish, and the community at large.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS MASS SCHEDULE

December 24:

8:00am 4th Sunday of Advent Mass

4:00pm Christmas Eve Children's Mass with prelude starting at 3:30

8:00pm Christmas Eve Mass, Adult Choir prelude at 7:30

December 25:

8:00am Christmas Day Mass with prelude at 7:30

January 1:

New Year's Day Mass at 8am

ON MISSION MAGAZINE REPLACES THE COMPASS



Beginning in January, all registered households in the Diocese of Green Bay will start receiving a new magazine delivered to their homes six times per year. This magazine will be named "On Mission" and it will be the official magazine of the Diocese of Green Bay featuring inspirational stories of Catholics living and exploring their faith. It will provide a forum for discussion and learning. On Mission replaces The Compass newspaper that was published for many years here in our diocese.

The current Compass e-newsletter will be redesigned, published weekly and delivered to digital devices as the "On Mission" newsletter. To receive the e-newsletter, you can sign up at: www.onmissionmedia.com.

The Compass newspaper will continue to be published through the end of 2023, with Dec. 29 as its final edition.

MEET OUR NEWEST MUSICIANS AND CANTORS

By Mary Ozarowicz

We are happy to welcome Dawn Valenta to St James music program as our Saturday evening Mass musician. Dawn has music experience performing in college choirs and with the Dudley Birder Chorale. She has been playing piano since high school.

Dawn noticed the "church musician mentoring program" in the church bulletin that is offered at St James and decided to give it a try. After a year of mentoring, learning the music, and lots of practicing, she is now playing at the Saturday evening Masses while her daughter, Ashley, who is in 6th grade, sings. St James is also blessed to have some new youth leading the



Dawn & Ashley Valenta

music at Mass and singing with the choir. Ezra Lyons, a freshman at Denmark High School, cantors at the Saturday Mass and his sister, Summerlin, who is in 4th grade, joins her brother singing with the choir at Sunday Mass. They are the children of Peter and Jill Lyons.



Ezra & Summerlin Lyons

Our young people are always welcome to sing with the choir, and the church musician mentoring program is offered to anyone with a background in piano. Please contact Choir Director Mary Ozarowicz at 920-660-7467.

PREPARING YOUR HEART

Continued from page 1

God. It is an act of humility, acknowledging our need for His mercy and forgiveness. During Advent, we rekindle our relationship with Him, and confession is the first step in restoring that connection.

3. Personal Transformation: Advent is about personal transformation and renewal. Confession empowers us to break free from sin, providing the opportunity to start anew with a clean heart. This renewal aligns with the message of hope and transformation that Advent conveys.

4. Preparing for Christmas with Joy: By confessing our sins and receiving God's mercy, we prepare for the celebration

of Christmas with a joyful heart. The burdens of guilt and sin are lifted, making room for the joy and peace that Christ's birth promises.

5. Spiritual Reflection: Advent encourages self-reflection. As we reflect on our lives during this season, confession helps us identify areas where we need to grow and improve. It provides an opportunity to receive guidance and counsel from a priest.

The Sacrament of Confession is a valuable spiritual practice year-round, but its significance is particularly poignant during the Advent season. It aligns perfectly with the themes of repentance,

renewal, and preparation that Advent represents. Through confession, we not only seek forgiveness but also the grace to change and grow, aligning our lives more closely with the teachings of Christ.

As we light the candles on the Advent wreath, let us also take this opportunity to light the candle of our souls through confession, allowing the transformative power of Christ's mercy to illuminate our hearts as we journey towards the celebration of His birth.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the author, Mary Ozarowicz.

Confessions are heard every weekend at 7:30pm on Saturday, and 7:00am on Sunday.

WELCOMING THE LITTLE ONES

by Patty Bekkers



Sunday Mass. We have kids from ages 3 to 2nd grade (up

until First Communion preparation time) invited to the parish hall after the opening prayer. While downstairs, they hear the Gospel message presented at their level followed by discussion, and then a craft project to take home. Children are encouraged to share what they learned with their parents. We love introducing Jesus to large groups of our young friends. Jean Schlies, Jessica Lambert and Patty Bekkers are lead catechists for Churchtime, assisted by some middle school/high school students. We are always interested and willing to have more adults and youth join in this ministry. And parents, please continue to allow us to introduce Jesus to your little ones at Churchtime.

INVESTING IN THE TRUE PURPOSE OF A PARISH

By Jean Schleis

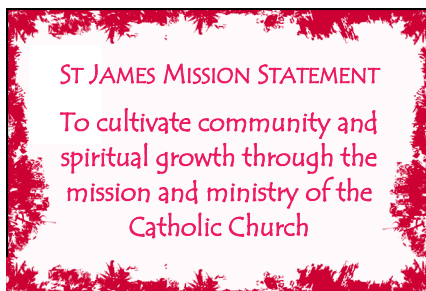
Buildings & Grounds Versus Ministry

What does the word “church” mean to you? For some, it is a building. It’s a place to go to celebrate milestones on life’s journey. Church can be a designated place to worship with God’s people and learn about one’s religion. Some think it is more about the people and how they profess their faith and less about the structure. But, in today’s world, unfortunately, the brick and mortar of a church building can sometimes cloud our perception of what a church really is.

When Jesus walked the earth, He did not ask His first followers to go out and build a church. He talked about the “Kingdom of God” which was not a structure for people to gather at. It was always greater than that. Jesus challenged the disciples to work for the heavenly kingdom and to bring that kingdom to others. That should be our definition of church – the way we follow in Jesus’ footsteps to gain eternal life in His Kingdom.

In the past several years at St.

James, leaders have found it necessary to focus on upkeep of the buildings and grounds, and not so much on how we bring people to the Kingdom of God. We were asked to help fund entrance repairs and install a better sound



system in church. We were challenged to fix the steeple and soon we’ll need to re-do the parking lot. Each of these projects have merit, but let’s not forget the true purpose of a church.

Our mission statement does not call us to take care of these “brick and mortar” needs. Don’t get this wrong...these recent capital expense projects were important, but they will eventually wear out, or the

building itself will no longer exist as St. James Church. Maintenance should not be the only emphasis for our church and allocation of funding. When we think about the capital expenses of the parish, we should include those that build up Jesus’ kingdom. Where we spend our money reveals our true priorities.

Our mission statement challenges us to “cultivate spiritual growth.” So how are we doing that? Is there an appeal for donations to support faith formation initiatives? Are we putting financial support into outreach programs? How much money have we put into welcoming people back to church? These are just a few ideas that we need to think about as we plan for the future of our parish. Brick and mortar needs should be balanced with ministry funding—not only on the physical upkeep of buildings and grounds. Our mission is discipleship, and we should invest in the Kingdom of God that isn’t bound by walls. Let’s not forget that.

SPECIAL PROJECTS REPORT

Southwest Entrance

Everyone was happy to see the work begin on our southwest church entrance. In October, IEI Construction was here to do the initial work of demolishing the outdoor steps and pouring new concrete ones. These steps have equal rise measurements and meet current building codes. One of the side concrete walls was torn down and replaced with a new one. A new railing was installed on this wall, and the steps are now usable. The outside door leading to the furnace room will be replaced soon.

But now that the weather is colder, we are at a standstill with this project. We still need the epoxy coating on all of these outside surfaces; and the interior work for the entryway to the furnace room and parish hall awaits. The contracted cost to repair the entrance is \$57,235 and it will be funded by an anonymous donation.

Lift

Going into this project, we knew that there would be a six month or longer hold up for delivery of the lift. It was ordered from Arrow Lift Company back in August, so we are

still waiting. The lift plans have been submitted to the State of Wisconsin for approval, but we are still waiting to hear from them. So, while on hold for now, this project can proceed when both of these factors are resolved despite cold winter weather. The contracted cost of the lift is \$78,371, and it is being funded by an anonymous donor and the parish portion of the recent “one by One” campaign.





UNDER THE STEEPLE

St. James
Cooperstown
www.stjamescooperstown.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ December 2 Advent Penance Service, 9-11am
- ◆ December 8 Immaculate Conception, Mass
7:30pm
- ◆ December 24 Christmas Eve
- ◆ December 25 Christmas Day
- ◆ January 1, 2024 New Year's Day

*December 25, 2023 thru January 1, 2024
Church Office will be closed*

- ◆ January 14 noon Grief Group: Where Are You God, in
the Midst of My Grief"
- ◆ March 10 noon Grief Group: "Caring for Yourself While
Grieving the Loss of a Loved One"

- ◆ Administrator: Reverend Santiago Turiano, Jr.
- ◆ Phone: 920-604-4090
Email: pastor@stjamescooperstown.org
- ◆ Deacon: Dan Gray: 920-246-4155
- ◆ Telephones: Office: 920-863-2585
Fax: 920-863-5445
Church Hall: 920-863-2383
- ◆ Mass Schedule:
Saturday 7:30pm
Sunday 8:00am; Live streamed on Facebook
- ◆ Reconciliation: 1/2 hour before weekend Masses
- ◆ Eucharistic Adoration: Saturdays 6:10-7:10pm
- ◆ Weekday Mass: Tuesday, 8:00am
- ◆ Faith Formation: Wednesday evenings
Grades 1-6: 6-7:15pm Grades 7-11: 7:30-8:45pm
- ◆ Parish Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday, 8:00am-1:00pm