

# Under the Steeple

ST. JAMES PARISH



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**OUR PARISH: ST. JAMES, COOPERSTOWN**

Start with Jesus! Our parish of St. James has subsisted in Cooperstown for over 175 years because Christ has always been at the center of our community. I have seen it. Having completed a full year since I became your pastor, I have come to realize that God has assigned me here for a reason. That reason is, of course, to lead you deeper in the Catholic faith, but also as I do that, through you, I can see the love of God. I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit has brought me here not only to help you grow in faith, but me too.

Last year at this time, we successfully completed resurfacing the parking lot, which was a job that required faith and trust that all would be well. We celebrated a beautiful All Souls Memorial Mass, by which we personally prayed for over 60 souls during a powerful liturgy that brought along with it conversions of heart and much needed healing from loss. I introduced you to Bambinelli Sunday, or the blessing of the

Baby Jesus figurines for use with Nativity scenes, along with showing you that your priest can sport rose and loves to do so. Our beautiful Christmas Mass at night, at which I described the nativity scene and the symbolic meanings of even the animals, and the Epiphany tradition of blessing doorways, along with the unusual celebration of Candlemas last February 2<sup>nd</sup> were all sources of grace, intrigue, and experiences of God that cannot go without mention.

We celebrated baptisms at which I catechized you on the various parts of the baptismal rite. There were powerful healing services at which the anointing of the sick was conferred, but also the opportunity to kneel close to the Lord exposed in the monstrance imploring healing and strength. I was humbled to have assisted Bishop Ricken and conferred the sacrament of confirmation



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**INVESTING IN THE FUTURE**

In today's world, the role of the church extends far beyond Sunday worship. Churches like St. James, which recently celebrated its historic 175th anniversary, stand as pillars of community, tradition, and faith. The longevity of such institutions owe much to the continued support of their members, both past and present. As we look to the future, it's important to reflect on what we, the current members of St. James can do to sustain and grow the vital work our church does every day.

we carry the responsibility of continuing this legacy. Your weekly giving isn't just about meeting rising costs; it's about investing in a vibrant, supportive parish that nurtures faith and fellowship. Every dollar you contribute helps keep the church lively, supports outreach programs, and enables it to respond to the needs of our members and the wider community. Without regular support that keeps up with inflation, essential ministries and outreach efforts could be at risk, limiting our ability to serve and make a positive impact.

As the current "owners" of St. James,

Moreover, giving deepens your connec-

*Continued on page 2*



**INVESTING IN THE FUTURE** *Continued from page 1*

tion to the church. It fosters a sense of shared responsibility and ownership, bringing our community closer together. Sacrificial gifts play a crucial role in ensuring our parish remains a beacon of hope and spiritual growth. By choosing to increase your support, you help us maintain our beautiful church, fairly compensate our pastor and staff, and provide religious instruction for our children and youth. And of course, the church is there for all at the time of a Baptism, Marriage, or Funeral.

Here are three suggestions on how to increase your Sacrificial Giving:

- Increase your weekly or monthly giving by a percentage. If you currently contribute \$20 each week, (or \$100 monthly) consider raising your donation by 10%, bringing it to \$22 per week, or \$1,200 per year. In just one year, that small increase makes a significant difference.

- Commit to an annual amount. Those who gave \$500 last year could increase that to \$600 a year. That would only be about \$2.00 more per Sunday.
- Set up automatic recurring donations and never miss a Sunday. St. James has an on-line giving option on our website, [stjamesandstjoseph.org/giving](http://stjamesandstjoseph.org/giving). Here you can sign up for regular, automatic contributions on a time schedule that works for you. Transfers from any bank account can be made to the church account without the hassle of using the envelope system or writing regular checks. It's easy and safe.



Please take a serious look at your level of contributions through Sacrificial Giving. Pray over what would be commensurate with your lifestyle, and thank you for considering an increase in your weekly giving.

**REROOFING OUR PARISH BUILDINGS**

*Both the rectory and church roofs are over 30 years old and need to be replaced.*



We became aware of small leaks in the rectory roof in spring. Bids for replacement were obtained, and after due consideration, Great Lakes Roofing was chosen for the work. It will be completed by the end of October at a cost of \$29,000.

The estimated cost to replace the roof on the church and steeple is approximately \$128,000. This is without any contingency, and could change a little before next summer when this roof will be replaced.



Both of these major projects represent a significant financial commitment that far exceeds our regular operating budget. That's why we need your help—your generous contribution is needed to ensure we can move forward with these critical repairs. We ask you to please consider making a meaningful donation today. Your support for these projects is not only appreciated, but truly vital to preserving our beloved parish for generations to come.



**YOUTH MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS**

by Deb Bradley



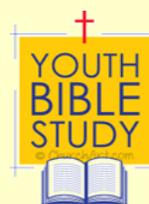
*National Make a Difference Day - October 25*

Youth Ministry is organizing the local Make a Difference Day on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. They will be making a difference in Denmark and the sur-

rounding area for those who could use a little help with fall clean up and getting ready for the winter season. The Denmark Knights of Columbus #4735 are teaming up with them in this endeavor.

**Youth/Young Adult Bible Study**

Youth Ministry began a bible study group for



high school/young adults in September of 2025. This group meets once a month to discuss various topics. Each session includes a meal, fun and fellowship. We anticipate continued growth in this group.

Watch the bulletin for the next bible study, or for more information, contact our Youth Ministry Coordinator, Deb Bradley at 920-660-7124.

## MANY HANDS MAKE THE WORK LIGHT!

by Monica Winnekens, Sacristan

In the last newsletter, we recognized many of the completed projects in and around the church that were successful due to our parish volunteers. In addition to those, we are truly grateful for all volunteers and donors in this new listing.

- ◆ This 'Under the Steeple' newsletter is prepared quarterly. It takes much effort on the part of the coordinator, authors of articles, those who review, edit, print and mail.
- ◆ The Fall Fundraiser takes a team of volunteers for the raffle, booyah, and bake sale. The Dinner and Dance is just around the corner, and volunteer efforts are already underway for this great event.
- ◆ Numbers 1-7 were donated and have been added to outside doors, with corresponding numbers on the inside to assist in identifying doors in the event of an emergency.
- ◆ Emergency phone numbers were updated and posted throughout the church and office.
- ◆ A larger outdoor sign was donated and installed in front of the parish office.
- ◆ Large address numbers were added onto a porch pillar of the parish office.
- ◆ Weekly money counters, those who lead the rosary in October, and the men's club breakfast volunteers all lend a helping hand.
- ◆ Members of the Parish Council, Finance Council,



Trustees, Maintenance, Worship, Prayer Shawl, Christian Mothers, Prayer Chain, Choir, Board of Education and others are invaluable to our parish.

- ◆ New garage windows for the rectory were donated and installed.
- ◆ Minister coordinators (servers, lectors, greeters, ushers, choir, flowers, EMHC's, environment, live streaming, tv monitor) and those who minister in all these roles continue to be a blessing to our parish.
- ◆ Pictures of Pope Leo, Bishop Ricken, and Fr. Brian have been placed in the church narthex and in the entrance to the parish office.
- ◆ New bulletin board guidelines were posted in the back of church.

Along with the many volunteer hours, we are grateful for all other donations. If you are interested in donating for some of the on-going needs of the parish, similar to a Mass stipend or memorial candles, following is a list of suggestions. Please contact Fr. Brian or Monica Winnekens if you are interested in any of these.

- ⇒ Sanctuary candles
- ⇒ Hosts to be consecrated at Mass
- ⇒ Wine to be consecrated at Mass
- ⇒ Easter candle
- ⇒ Palm branches

*Again, thank you to all volunteers!*

### NEW OFFICE SIGN



Have you noticed the new St. James Parish Office sign? This was a donation from a lovely Christian couple, Elise and Chris Theobald, owners of Covenant Sign & Graphics on Velp Avenue in Green Bay.

*God Bless them for their generosity!*

### MASS INTENTIONS

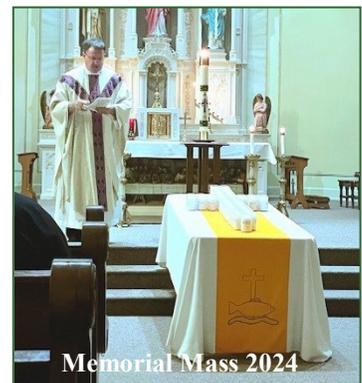
The Parish Office is scheduling Mass Intentions into 2026. Mass intentions could be for a loved one who passed away, in thanksgiving for an anniversary, an answered prayer, for healing, for peace, or for anonymity, a special intention. The stipend for each Mass is \$20. Please call the parish office at 920-863-2585 to book a Mass.

### MASS FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

On Saturday, November 1 at 7:30pm here will be a Memorial Mass to pray for all our parishioners who have passed away in the past year, from November 1, 2024 through October 31, 2025. Names of the departed will be read and a candle will be lit in their name. Parishioners whose funerals were held at St. James will be automatically included, but if you have lost

a loved one who was not a member of the parish, you are welcome to contact the parish office to have them included as well. Please call the parish office at 920-863-2585.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.*



OUR PARISH: ST. JAMES, COOPERSTOWN

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on most of our candidates last year, which is a privilege I will never forget. The power of the Holy Spirit was truly and powerfully present through it all.

Last summer 50 people sojourned with me on the Doorways to Hope pilgrimage, which was a wonderful day of grace, fellowship, and laughter. Moreover, by God's providence, I was blessed to celebrate the 175th anniversary with you as your pastor, which incidentally took place during the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea which took place in the year 325. There are not many parishes that can claim to be older than us

in the diocese and that is something to be extremely grateful for. There have been so many little, but profound blessings and graces that Jesus Christ revealed himself to all of us this year. I have highlighted these memories to show that truly the presence of the Lord is in this place and Jesus has blessed us and will continue to.

On a personal note, thank you, for your prayers and support at the death of my feline friend, my Big Buddy, Rexy. He had been with me for ten years and across three pastoral assignments. It was in Rexy's death that I felt the grace and goodness of God

through you the most. I now know why God sent me here. You needed a pastor; but the Holy Spirit knew, I needed you. That relationship continues and I can with certainty say, I am the most blessed priest in the diocese of Green Bay. Whereas there has been and will most certainly be more bumps in the road and our challenges will continue, Jesus is clearly here and I am both proud and humbled at the same time to be here with you in Cooperstown and would not want to be anywhere else.

Blessings,  
Fr. Brian

FUNDRAISING

by Dawn Rabas



The Fall Fundraiser was held on Sunday September 7, 2025 with a cash raffle, carry out booyah and bake sale. The profit was an amazing \$11,722.00.

The winners of the raffle were as follows:

- |                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1st Prize \$1,000 | Dave Schlies and Julie Schultz |
| 2nd Prize \$500   | Judie Tadych                   |
| 3rd Prize \$250   | Kelly Otto                     |
| 4th Prize \$150   | Mark Schlies                   |
| 5th Prize \$100   | Chad Kane                      |

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the fall fundraiser a success!

Our 2026 Dinner & Dance will be held on Saturday February 7, 2026. Please mark your calendar to save the date.

*Dinner & Dance*  
*Saturday, February 7, 2026*  
*at Gatherings 43, Denmark*

Note that the time will be one hour earlier than in the past, with registration starting at 4pm, Dinner at 5pm, Live Auction at 6pm, and Music from 7-10 pm.

When you are Christmas shopping, we kindly ask you to consider assembling a themed basket for our silent auction or bucket raffle. We're also accepting monetary contributions and gift certificates now. Watch for additional information in a letter that will be mailed to you in early December.

UPCOMING NOTEWORTHY MASSES

- |         |         |                                                                                           |
|---------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nov. 1  | 8:00 AM | All Saints Day Mass                                                                       |
| Nov. 1  | 7:30 PM | All Souls Day Commemorative Mass                                                          |
| Nov. 27 | 8:00 AM | Thanksgiving Day Mass                                                                     |
| Dec. 8  | 7:30 PM | Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)                                            |
| Dec. 24 | 4:00 PM | Christmas Eve - Children's Mass                                                           |
| Dec. 24 | 8:00 PM | Christmas Eve - Mass at Night                                                             |
| Dec. 25 | 8:00 AM | Christmas Day - Mass at Dawn<br>(Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation)                   |
| Jan. 1  | 8:00 AM | New Year's Day - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (New Years is a Holy Day of Obligation) |

FUTURE GRIEF GROUP GATHERINGS

November 1, 2025  
"Coping With the Holidays in the Midst of Your Grief"

January 11, 2026  
"Interactive Q & A Covering Various Topics Related to Grief"

The group meets from 12:00-2:00pm, both in person at St James Parish Hall and via zoom. Please call Tom Bekkers at 920-660-8066 with questions.



# 175<sup>TH</sup> CELEBRATION: IT'S A WRAP

by Jean Schleis

# Celebrating 175 YEARS 1850—2025

On July 27, 2025, St. James Church celebrated in a big way its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event attracted a significant gathering of parish members and long-time friends.

Highlights of the day included a 10AM Mass celebrated by clergy who had ties to St. James Parish, notably Bishop Frank Dewane. Afterward, festivities continued both indoors and outdoors. Historical artifacts were on display in the parish hall, including banners created for the church's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Guests could also watch video interviews of current church members who shared personal stories about their lives and involvement at the church. DeGrand's Family Restaurant provided lunch, and beverages were available outside under a large tent. There was musical entertainment by the Mark Jirikovec band and a group of Irish dancers performed. The legacy of faith and fellowship was evident as generations of families and longtime friends reunited and shared memories.

Starting back in September 2023, the planning committee worked together to organize every part of the celebration. Their tireless efforts and attention to detail ensured that everything ran smoothly—from the heartfelt welcome extended to guests, to the carefully arranged historical displays to entertainment throughout the afternoon. The event's success was a direct result of their commitment, allowing families and longtime friends to gather, reminisce, and forge new memories in a meaningful way. Special appreciation is owed to committee members Father Brian Belongia, Joyce Cisler, Paula Haske, John Heiser, Jane Hertel, Roxane Hopkins, Jean Schleis, Jim Stangel, Lee Verkuilen, Michelle Wallerius, Monica Winnekens and Brandon Wotachek.

Numerous financial contributions offset the expenses of the day. Individuals and groups who donated \$250 or more included Philip and Mary Ann Baranowski, Catholic Financial Life, The Catholic Foundation for the Green Bay Diocese, Deacon Dan & Patty Gray, Herman's Heating and Air Conditioning, John Pailer, St. James Christian Mothers, St. James Men's Club, Dave Schlies and Julie Schultz, Mike Taddy, and Thrivent Financial Life. As a result, all expenses were fully covered, and the parish did not incur any event-related costs. Thank you!



## PRAYER BOOKLETS

LIVING FAITH booklets are quarterly publications with daily reflections on the readings. You can pick one up in church on the back shelf by the bulletin board. A small donation is asked to cover the cost. An envelope is provided to drop in the collection basket during Mass.

LENTEN AND ADVENT reflection booklets are also provided during these liturgical seasons. Donations are requested to help offset their costs as well.

## PARISH BREAKFAST



St. James Men's Club will hold their annual parish breakfast on Sunday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> following the 8:00AM Mass. The breakfast comes with all the fixings and desserts. Help serving the breakfast and donated desserts are appreciated.

Please call John Heiser at 920-863-6066.

Adults: \$9.00 Age 5-10: \$5.00 Preschool: Free

*All are welcome to attend!*



## UNDER THE STEEPLE

**St. James**  
Cooperstown  
www.stjamescooperstown.org

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- November 1 All Saints Day Mass, 8:00AM
- November 1 Grief Group: "Coping with the Holidays in the Midst of Your Grief." 12:00PM
- November 1 All Souls Day Memorial Mass, 7:30PM
- November 2 Men's Club Breakfast following 8AM Mass
- November 8/9 National Collection for the Military
- November 27 Thanksgiving Day Mass 8:00AM
- December 3 Baptism Class, 6:00PM
- December 8 Immaculate Conception Mass

- ◆ Pastor: Fr. Brian Belongia  
Phone: 920-272-8172  
Email: fatherbrian.sjcsjk2024@gmail.com
- ◆ Deacon: Dan Gray: 920-246-4155
- ◆ Telephone: Office: 920-863-2585  
Fax: 920-863-5445
- ◆ Mass Schedule:  
Saturday 7:30PM  
Sunday 8:00AM; Live streamed on Facebook  
Weekday Mass: Tuesday, 8:00AM, Live streamed
- ◆ Faith Formation: Wednesday evenings  
Grades 1 - 6: 6:00 - 7:15PM  
Grades 7 - 11: 7:30 - 8:45PM