

interim

Volume 37, Issue 12

December 2019

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

be prepared *Message from leadership*

What do The Lion King and Advent have in common?



Advent is upon us. Reflecting on what to write about the season, my thoughts, of course, turned to preparation. Almost immediately then my mind went to the song Be Prepared, featured in the Disney movie The Lion King. Although it might seem a stretch to make a connection between the film and Advent, a few of the words from the song lend themselves to

bridging the two. "So prepare for the chance of a lifetime. Be prepared for sensational news. A shining new era is tiptoeing nearer."

For what are we preparing? During Advent, we are not preparing for the birth of Christ, something that already happened. We are preparing for what is yet to happen more deeply in us all -- the change of heart, the

transformation, that allows us to become more Christ-like and active participants in building the reign of God.

Advent indeed is preparing for the chance of a lifetime, for sensational news and a shining new era. May we all be active participants.

God bless you this Advent season.

Sr. Mary



a new mural in the neighborhood

The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network's (SSJNN) mission is to revitalize the neighborhoods it

serves and to empower the people who live there. The SSJNN also works to

bring beauty to the neighborhoods through parks, landscaping, and art.

(Continued on page 3)

2019 Advent/ Christmas Liturgical Services at the CLC.

If you wish to stay for a meal, please make a reservation.

Sundays in Advent 4:00 p.m.

Advent Prayer/Reflections

Dec. 1 4 p.m.

Sr. Carmel Rojek

Dec. 8 4 p.m.

Sr. André Feulner

Dec. 15 4 p.m.

Sr. Linda Fusco

Dec. 22 4 p.m.

Sr. Clare Marie Beichner

Tues. Dec. 3 4 p.m.

Advent Reconciliation Service with Fathers Strohmeyer, Bogniak, Miller, Hoffman and Fischer

Fri. Dec. 6 5:45 p.m.

First Friday Holy Hour

Mon. Dec. 9 8 a.m.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception liturgy

Thurs., Dec. 12 8 a.m.

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe liturgy

Tues., Dec. 24 8 p.m.

Christmas Eve Liturgy

Wed. Dec. 25 9 a.m.

Christmas Day Liturgy

Mon., Dec. 31 4 p.m.

Prayer for Blessing on the Year Past and Present

where courage and hope meet

Presentation by Norma Pimentel, MJ

*Executive Director, Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley
See page 5 for details*

mission possible

Sr. Ann Marie Cappello, SSJ, Mission Integration Coordinator

MISSION: POSSIBLE!

This week we celebrate Thanksgiving – a day to reflect on our blessings and all that we have. Among the blessings I am grateful for are the people who

serve in staff positions for our congregation. This includes dedicated employees at the CLC and in SSJ administration, as well as partners in ministry who serve our sponsored ministries. Sisters formerly held many of these positions. It is through their dedication and numerous others that the ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph continue to

serve those in need. How blessed we are, for they make the **SSJ Mission Possible**.

I recently came across the following prayer by Sallie Latkovich, CSJ, that I'd like to share with you. Sister Sallie is a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph, where she presently serves on its Leadership Team.

Thanksgiving Prayer

May the light of our gratitude burn brightly in our hearts and in our world. In the silence of our hearts, let each of us give thanks for all the many gifts that are ours. Let us also be mindful of those today who are without food, family, or home. Let us remember all whom we love who are not now present with us here: those who have gone before us, those in the present time, and those to be born whom we will love.

God of all good gifts, from your holy heart has come a flood of gifts upon us. With uplifted hearts, we gather together to thank you with prayer and with the worship of feasting.

We are grateful not only for the gift of life itself, but for all the gifts of friendship, love, devotion, and forgiveness that we have shared.

May we give our thanks by lives of service, by deeds of hospitality, by kindness to strangers and by concern for one another.

We are most grateful this feast day for the way You, our God, are visible to us in one another, in countless daily gifts, in the marvels of creation.

We bless you oh God, for the blessings of our lives; and invite you to bless our table and all of the food of this feast that we share. Let us thank the Lord today and all days. Amen.

—Sallie Latkovich, CSJ

reflections on the agrégée retreat

by SSJ Agrégée Charlene Kellerman

During a recent autumn weekend, eight agrégées gathered at Villa Rosa for an annual retreat. With the companionship of Sr. Marianne Stuckert, we welcomed Lori True as facilitator. Lori lives in St. Paul, MN and serves the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet as Director of Ritual and Liturgy. She is also a liturgical composer and conducts many retreats, both solo and with her friend, David Haas.

The weekend was filled with song, quiet reflection, scripture, theological writings, laughter, tears, learning new instruments, an agree meal and a moving

blessing ritual.

We were led through reflections on Beloved Baptizer, Teacher, Preacher, Healer, Dreamer and Doer with Scripture and writings by Henri Nouwen, Walter Brueggemann, Ilia Delio, Angelica Hopes, Elizabeth Johnson and Albert Einstein.

Perhaps Lori captured the weekend best: "... what we all hold in common never ceases to amaze me...we all want to be better people in the world. It was quite

evident that God was truly present and working in the lives of these wonderful people. The hardest truth for people to wrap their heads and hearts around is their own worthiness - that we all are the beloved of God. Once

we own this thought about ourselves we can begin to understand our calling and purpose. Seeing God in everyone, especially those we would rather not see, is our sacred call and sacred entrustment, indeed!"



One love *shared*

During this Holy season, we celebrate the greatest gift ever – that One Love shared with the world through the birth of Jesus. And we are reminded that the gifts we are given, we are given to share.

Last year, the love you shared changed thousands of lives. Whether you made a gift, offered a helping hand, or held us in prayer, you strengthened our ministries and made it possible for us to be present in new ways to neighbors in need.

Last year, financial gifts to the Sisters of St. Joseph Mission &

Ministries Foundation – which were shared through grants to the Sisters and their sponsored ministries – helped to provide:

- care for the Sisters;
- shelter for homeless men in Erie and Meadville;
- housing and mentoring for women and children striving to rebuild their lives;
- career awareness education in inner-city elementary and middle schools; and
- food for the hungry throughout the Diocese and beyond.

But the work is far from done.

The needs of the dear neighbor continue to grow.

Help us bring this year's appeal to a successful close. Whether you can help with a gift yourself, or by inviting your friends and family to consider a gift, it will help us to continue sharing love and hope with those who need it most.

If a gift is not possible at this time, please keep the dear neighbor in your prayers. And as always, we will do the same for you.

Gifts can be made online at www.ssjerie.org or contact the Development office at 814-836-4198.

Outstanding Philanthropic Organization

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania were recognized as the **2019 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization** at the recent **National Philanthropy Day** event hosted by the **Northwest Pennsylvania Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals**.

More than 150 people attended the annual event which honors outstanding

philanthropists who make an impact in the communities of northwest Pennsylvania and who inspire everyday philanthropy.

The SSJs were nominated by **Almitra Clerkin, Associate Vice President for University Advancement, Gannon University**.



Almitra Clerkin (left) with S. Mary Drexler.

Photo credit: Rick Klein

Mural

(Continued from page 1)

Through the years, the SSJNN has funded the creation of 16 murals. Recently, the addition of a 17th mural, the first in the SSJNN's east Erie neighborhoods, took place.

This new mural needed to be special, and provide a high-impact foundation for additional improvements in the area. A committee of neighborhood residents brainstormed ideas and themes. Gaven Hedderick of Rog's Inc. offered space for the mural on his building at 18th

and Parade Streets. Erie Arts & Culture director, Patrick Fisher, suggested bringing an international artist to Erie for the project and with the help of Iryna Kanishcheva of GNV Urban Art LLC from Gainesville, FL, Manolo Mesa of Spain was selected.

Manolo chose the theme neighbors from the committee's list of ideas, and he created a mural based on a photograph of actual neighbors in the area. Manolo was welcomed enthusiastically by

the neighbors who brought him refreshments as he worked, posted progress updates on Facebook and Instagram, and brought friends and family to see the art. The City of Erie administration featured him during the Mayor's weekly press conference and gave him a key to the city. Everyone enjoyed Manolo's peaceful and joyful presence and celebrated the entire experience as a "new birth" of art in the neighborhood.

get to know ssj associates



Edith Benson

Edith Benson, one of six children in her family, was born in Columbia, SC, and lived in Augusta, GA, and the Bronx, NY. During her younger years, she had aspirations to become a medical doctor and help others. Her career plans changed, however, when she was inspired by the work of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. Marshall also served as the head lawyer for the NAACP during the Civil Rights Movement. Edith decided that she, too, could be of service to others as a lawyer.

After receiving her degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1974, she spent her legal career helping those on the margins of society.

Edith is a member of St. Peter's Cathedral, where she serves as a Eucharistic minister and is involved with the Day of Caring and the Bishop's Breakfast programs.

Additionally, she serves on the board of St. Patrick's Haven and visits guests there each month.

Edith says she has great admiration for the SSJ commitment to God and neighbor. She became an associate in 2018. Associate Mary Fuhrman was her mentor.

associates' news and happenings

Birthday Greetings

Happy birthday to associates who are celebrating their birthdays in December, especially to **Paul Wilkosz, Mary Ann Cox** and **Jean Heintzel** who are celebrating milestone birthdays!

A special happy birthday/ Merry Christmas to **Judy Lynch** who celebrates on December 25th.

Candidate Session

The associate candidates will meet on Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 am in the gathering room at the CLC. **Sister Mary Ann White** will give a presentation on the SSJ Mission and Ministry.

Prayer Shawls

Just a reminder... there are prayer shawls available in the associate office.

Thank you

We wish to thank **Sister Mary Rose Romeo** for preparing the touching Memorial Service for our deceased Sisters, Associates and Agrégées which was held on November 10. They are **forever in our hearts**. We are also grateful to Sr. Mary Rose for beautifully including the associate commitment service for Linda Winters in that day's Sunday liturgy.

Welcome!

We welcome **Linda Winters** who made her associate commitment during the Sunday Liturgy November 17, 2019.



*Pictured, above left: (l-r) new Associate **Linda Winters** and her mentor, **Sr. Martha Howick**.*

Interested?

We are in need of an associate who will take responsibility for sending December birthday cards to our associates. If anyone is interested in this ministry, please call **Patty George** at 836-4134 or email her at patty.george@ssjerie.org.

Brainstorming

The members of the Associate Advisory Committee will be meeting to brain storm possibilities for future associate enrichment sessions, prayer groups, retreats, social events, etc. If you have any suggestions, please send your ideas to **Patty George** at patty.george@ssjerie.org so that we might include them in our planning.



celebrating suffragettes

We participated in the 100th Anniversary Suffragette celebration by hosting a prayer service and displaying the Suffragette Quilt which tells the story of the Suffragettes. Part of the celebration includes a community mural which was brought to the CLC in order for our sisters to paint portions of it. The mural will be completed by many community partners.



where courage and hope meet

"After they had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt and stay there until I tell you.'"

Matthew 2:13

With images of the Holy Family' fleeing from their home country as a backdrop, you are invited to listen to Sr. Norma Pimentel's experiences of welcoming and caring for families who come to our borders seeking hospitality and safety.

In her keynote address at the 2019 Religious Formation Congress, Sr. Norma spoke of the universal call to embrace our brothers and sisters who are forced to migrate from their homeland with courage and hope.

This is a call that has been given to us by Jesus and

emphasized by Pope Francis.

In her presentation, Sister Norma explores this call by sharing how the Humanitarian Respite Center, a ministry of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, has received, assisted, and supported more than 100,000 individuals and is inspiring our church and world to do the same.

Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, oversees the charitable arm of the Diocese of Brownsville, providing oversight to different ministries and programs. She was instrumental in quickly organizing community resources to respond to the surge of Central Americans seeking asylum in the U.S. and setting up the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, TX.

In God's Perfect Time

Advent Reflections and Concert with Dan Schutte
Composer of *Here I am Lord, City of God, Sing a New Song* and more.

Sunday,
December 15, 2019
3:00 p.m.

Our Lady of Mercy Church
Harborcreek, PA
Free and open to all!

Where Courage and Hope Meet

Norma Pimentel, MJ
Executive Director,
Catholic Charities of
the Rio Grande Valley

Two presentations:
Dec. 9 3:00 p.m.
Dec. 10 6:00 p.m.



SSJ Community Living Center

events, happenings and ministry news

St. Patrick's Haven

The visiting team at St. Patrick's Haven commit to spending one evening a month for an hour at 7 p.m. talking with our guests. Can you spare an hour and join our team? We have a large need for more people to help with this important ministry. Please contact **Betsy Wiest** at 836-4153 for more information.

Holiday Struggles?

The holidays can be difficult when grieving the loss of a loved one, struggling with illness, or even the loss of a job. Please join others feeling the same for a time of comfort, warmth, and love.

**Wednesday, December 11
6 p.m.**

**Luther Memorial Church
225 West 10th Street, Erie**
A reception will follow. The church is handicap accessible, and has a well-lit parking lot/security.

CLC Sisters' Fundraiser

Sisters at the CLC will be fundraising during Advent to help support the people in the Bahamas who were affected by hurricanes. Donations collected will be sent to Sisters who are there and who have seen the devastation first-hand. Sisters will also be collecting donations for Associate Jane Zawacki's niece, who is also Sister Judith and Sister Anita James' great niece. She will be getting a service dog to assist her with mobility issues. There will be a canister in the front lobby for donations during Advent.



The **SSJ Neighborhood Network** will participate in #iGiveCatholic on Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2019. igivecatholic.org

SMILE!

If you are doing some online shopping this season, you can designate the SSJ Neighborhood Network when shopping with Amazon Smile and 0.5 % of each eligible purchase will be given to the SSJNN.

Ageless Wonders!

Recently, the youngest members of our congregation gathered for some social time. Pictured (l-r): Sisters Linda Fusco, Clare Marie Beichner, Mary Ann White, Phyllis McCracken, Mary Drexler, Claudia Dombrowski, Phyllis DiFuccia, Marianne Stuckert, Susan Herzing, Nancy Fischer, Nancy Prenatt and Mary Rose Romeo. Not pictured is S. Carol Morehouse who took the photo.



notes



Dear Sisters, Agrégée, and Associates,
Our family thanks you for your presence, cards, prayers, and support at the time of Bill's passing. I'm sure he is smiling down at us and cheering us on as we continue our good works. Grateful to all of you.
The Hilbert Family

Directory updates

Agrégée Michelle Tortorelli
new email address
molly9596@outlook.com

Associate Mary Ann White
new email address
mawhite4269@gmail.com



**SSJ Gift Shop
NOW OPEN**

*Bring your
friends and family!*

**Located just off the CLC lobby
Hours: 9: a.m.— 7:00 p.m.**

Hand-crafted/original cards, seasonal cards, framed photography, inspirational sayings, etc. Featuring art-work and designs by Sisters of St. Joseph.

where's the justice?

Welcome new citizens

Over 100 people from 20 countries recently took their oath of U.S. citizenship at the Erie Federal Court House. They were welcomed by Mayor Joe Schember, Representative Bob Merski and representatives from Mercyhurst University, One Table, the Sisters of St. Joseph and the League of Women Voters.

Credit Union gives back to community

The employees of the Erie Federal Credit Union once again donated socks they recently collected for St. Patrick's Haven through their Acts of Kindness Program.



Beyond the gates

Students at Mercyhurst University participating in their Beyond the Gates Program have been visiting with the guests at St. Patrick's Haven. BTG is a required course for sophomores at the University in which they volunteer at area nonprofits and then write about how the experience has impacted them. During the Fall 2019 semester, 17 male students have been visiting two hours a week with the men. Students have reported that in the beginning of the experience they were nervous but by the end of the semester, students reported "I realized how good this bunch of guys were and it was a pleasure for me to spend time with them." Thank you Mercyhurst University for partnering with St. Patrick's Haven and helping us continue our mission to serve homeless men in Erie.

JPIC —join us!

Do you turn on the news each day and wonder what can be done to help our world deal with issues such as human trafficking, the environment, immigration, the death penalty, etc? Consider joining the **Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Team**. JPIC sponsors activities throughout the year to bring awareness of issues and to make the world a better place. If you have a heart for social justice and helping others, please call **Betsy Wiest**, Social Justice Coordinator at 814-836-4153.



ServErie serves St. Patrick's Haven

The sitting and TV rooms at St. Patrick's Haven were given an update when the Penn State-Behrend women's basketball team painted them as part of the recent ServErie initiative. The team, under the direction of ServErie team leader, Gabriel Schreckengost, arrived in the morning and by noon, the rooms were painted and put back together. Thank you ServErie for your continued support of St. Patrick's Haven.



ServErie volunteers at St. Patrick's Haven.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Developed in 2015 and to be completed by the year 2030.



GOAL #2:

to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. More than 800 million people suffer from hunger worldwide. Hungry people are less productive, more prone to disease and less able to improve their livelihoods. To end hunger and malnutrition requires promoting sustainable agriculture practices such as supporting small scale farmers and allowing equal access to land, technology and markets.

TAKE ACTION: Purchase produce from local farmers.

Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania

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One Love by Betsy Wiest, SSJ Social Justice Coordinator

As the Advent and Christmas seasons begin, I am again in awe of the *One Love* God has shown to us. God sent His only Son to teach us how to love one another. We are called to care for the "dear neighbor" and follow Christ's example. It seems like a tall order but it is really very simple. Spend time in prayer and listen to where God is calling you to help. Then learn about the area where you are being led and come up with an action plan. You can help by bringing awareness to a social justice issue, donating funds to assist an organization or volunteering your time and talents to help those in need.

Here are some other suggestions:

- Attend the **Pro-Life breakfast** in your area or go to the annual **Pro-Life March** in Washington, DC on January 24, 2020.

- Remember the students we sponsor in **Haiti** through prayer and donations. Haiti is currently in political turmoil, so please remember the people of Haiti in your daily prayers.
- Learn about human trafficking and help raise awareness of modern day slavery. If you see something, say something and call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888**.
- Attend a **Take Back the Site Vigil** to pray for victims of crime, but also for a change of heart for the perpetrators. Pray for the end of violence in our world.
- Do one thing each day to

address **climate change**.

Some easy suggestions would be to: recycle, attend a climate change activity, take reusable bags when shopping, say no to plastic straws.

- Help pass legislation that supports your cause. Call your **U.S. Senators and Representatives at (202) 224-3121** and let them know your opinions.
- Don't forget to **VOTE!!** This is your voice for change in our nation. Don't let your vote be silent.

I wish you God's peace in the upcoming Advent and Christmas season. May you know His love, *One Love*, every day and may you spread that *One Love* to everyone you meet.

