

# ST. LUKE'S MISSION OF MERCY

## "Where else would you rather be than right here, right now?"

Those famous words uttered by Marv Levy, former head coach and present general manager of the Buffalo Bills, echo the way we feel coming upon the holiest time of our liturgical year! Where else would you rather be as we pray, fast and give alms throughout Lent than at St. Luke's, where a servant's heart is always welcome? Where else would you rather celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ than at St. Luke's, where the reality of God's love can be seen, heard and touched? Where else would you rather be to celebrate Divine Mercy than at St. Luke's, where Mercy lives and breathes and walks among us? This is our time! Join us when and how you can, and know you are always loved and appreciated. Celebrate! It is time!

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# Word from Amy and Norm

Co-founders and directors, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Things are hectic and ever changing at the mission. We have eight Argentinian families housed at mission houses and the surrounding area. The women help daily in the kitchen and are hard workers. Fr. Moreno celebrates Spanish mass once a month and his wife Evelyn is teaching the faith to three of the ladies. We are so blessed because many members of these families will be baptized, and or brought farther in the faith by receiving their first communion and confirmation during our Easter Vigil. We just never know who the Lord will bring to us next. We stay open to His call.

Another change that will have a direct effect on the Mission is the cancellation of our annual St. Joseph's Day table. St. John Maron's is renovating their hall and unavailable. Though they tried, the FOSL's were unable to find an adequate place to have it this year. The Mission has come to depend on this fundraiser every year to get us through the winter. As a result, we are asking all those who have attended this yearly fund-raiser in the past to please consider making a donation equal to the value you would have spent on the cancelled event. If you don't usually attend, please consider a donation to help us through this time of need. Mother Angelica always says, "put us between your gas and electric bill"; well, we are asking you to put us between your gas and cell phone bill! Thank you in advance for anything that you can possibly send.

We are adding a new fundraiser this year on April 1<sup>st</sup> from 6PM to 11PM: Good Shepherd parish in Pendleton will be hosting "Balloons and Tunes"! There will be karaoke with the Voices of Mercy, a Chinese auction, meat raffle, and balloons with prizes to be purchased. Because the FOSL's are involved, you know there will be plenty of great food! Please come and support us and have a wonderful time!

As always, we and the missionaries of St. Luke's Mission of Mercy thank you so much for all that you do. Your support allows us to serve God's people, and we couldn't do what we do without you! May God generously bless you for your generosity!

*In His Mercy,  
Amy Betros and Norm Paolini*

**St. Luke's is on the World Wide Web!**  
**[www.stlukesmissionofmercy.org](http://www.stlukesmissionofmercy.org)**

Check out the great Thanksgiving Food Giveaway video, check the calendar, read the need of the month, and so much more!



## Reason to be **JOYFUL!**

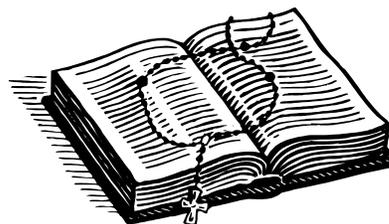
At St. Luke's we see hearts and lives changed for the better every day! In this new column we would like to highlight some of the exciting things happening among those we serve at the Mission. Some may be big events, others small victories...but each one is a testament to the power of God! Celebrate with us, and know that YOUR prayers and support help us to touch lives with mercy every day!

- Congratulations to Michael Nortz of the Good Shepherd Residence upon graduation from ECC with an Associates degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management!
- Joyce Elliott has celebrated 8 YEARS drug free!
- Charlene Bailey recently graduated from Drug Court!
- James Staley of the St. John Bosco House earned his GED in January!



# Looking for a way to serve?

Sharon Drabek offers a glimpse into the life of a FOSL!



## The Divine Mercy Chaplet

The years have gone by too fast since the beginning of the FOSL (Friends of St. Luke's), from the first meeting in the sacristy, to our monthly meetings now at Infant of Prague. From our first FOSL list of 10 people to our current mailing list of over 2000 things have come and gone a long way.

The work is hard, but the benefits are out of this world; and it is for the benefits that make us do what we do.

Being a FOSL is not just being a part of a "group"; it is being part of a family. Just like a family there are good times, hard times, fun times, sad times. The main purpose of the FOSLs was to raise money for the bills, but we do so much more. We have come together to help paint, clean, decorate, pack food, teach, stuff envelopes, sell merchandise, and help in any way that is needed at the Mission.

We do not only come together to work but we come together with our fellow FOSLs in their time of joy to celebrate and to grieve in their time of sorrow or loss. We come to together for spiritual growth and learning, retreats, Masses, novenas, and pilgrimages. We learn from one another and build friendships. As we help the Mission to grow we help one another in our own personal growth. There is always room for more people to join us and experience our journey. The work is hard, but the benefits are out of this world!



The Divine Mercy Chaplet is the daily prayer of the Missionaries, Associates, Junior Associates, FOSL's, and of millions of the faithful throughout the world. Revealed to St. Faustina as a prayer for mercy desired by our Lord, the devotion has become an important and beloved prayer in our Church. Great promises have been made to those who pray the Chaplet, as recorded in St. Faustina's Diary:

*Encourage souls to say the Chaplet which I have given you (Diary, 1541). Whoever will recite it will receive great mercy at the hour of death (Diary, 687). When they say this chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person, not as the just Judge but as the Merciful Savior (Diary, 1541). Priests will recommend it to sinners as their last hope of salvation. Even if there were a sinner most hardened, if he were to recite this chaplet only once, he would receive grace from My infinite mercy (Diary, 687). I desire to grant unimaginable graces to those souls who trust in My mercy (Diary, 687). Through the Chaplet you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will (Diary, 1731).*

- *Marians of the Immaculate Conception (www.marian.org)*

### The Chaplet

Make the Sign of the Cross

**Pray:**

The Our Father

The Hail Mary

The Apostles' Creed

#### **On each of the "Our Father Beads":**

Eternal Father, I offer you the body and blood, soul and divinity of you dearly beloved Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

#### **On each of the "Hail Mary Beads":**

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

#### **After five decades:**

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. (3x)

#### **It is the custom at St. Luke's to recite this prayer from the Diary:**

Eternal God, in whom Mercy is endless, and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your Mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your Holy Will, which is Love and Mercy itself.

#### **Conclude:**

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you. (3x)

Jesus, I trust in you. (3x)

Make the sign of the cross.

## March

- 1<sup>st</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
Blessed Sacrament Church
- 4<sup>th</sup> Day Trip to Syracuse  
Blessed Marianne Cope
- 6<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 6PM  
Precious Blood Church
- 11<sup>th</sup> Lay Associate Formation  
Day of Reflection 1PM – 8PM
- 15<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
St. Mary's in Swormville
- 28<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
St. Luke's Mission of Mercy

## April

- 1<sup>st</sup> Balloons and Tunes!  
Fundraiser for St. Luke's
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Healing Mass 6PM  
Precious Blood Church
- 5<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
Blessed Sacrament Church
- 9<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday Mass 1PM  
Lenten Penance Service 5PM
- 13<sup>th</sup> Seder 4PM  
Holy Thursday Mass 7PM  
Church closes at Midnight
- 14<sup>th</sup> Outdoor Stations 12PM  
Liturgy of the Passion 2PM  
Divine Mercy Novena 7PM  
-Seven Last Words of Christ
- 15<sup>th</sup> Novena 7PM  
Easter Vigil 9PM
- 16-22 Novena and Mass 7PM
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Divine Mercy Sunday  
Confessions 1PM  
Chaplet 3PM  
Mass 3:15PM
- 25<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
St. Luke's Mission of Mercy
- 26<sup>th</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
St. Margaret's Church

## May

- 1<sup>st</sup> Healing Mass 6PM  
Precious Blood Church
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
Blessed Sacrament Church
- 6<sup>th</sup> Cinderella at St. Luke's!
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
St. Luke's Mission of Mercy
- 29<sup>th</sup> Memorial Mass 10AM  
Holy Sepulchre
- 31<sup>st</sup> Healing Mass 7PM  
Holy Trinity Church

# THE CALENDAR

GET ON ST. LUKE'S TIME!

## The Paschal Triduum



### Holy Thursday

4:00PM.....**Seder**

Join us for a celebration of our heritage! Led by Lenny Marks and Drew Bernstein, the Seder focuses our attention on the constant and abiding love of our Father in Heaven. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: 894-4476

7:00PM.....**Mass**

The Holy Thursday Mass is highlighted by the washing of feet, the stripping of the altar, and the repose of our Lord in the side chapel. The church will be open until midnight for adoration. Make us a stop on your seven-church pilgrimage!

### Good Friday

12 Noon.....**Stations of the Cross**

Our beautiful memorial of Christ's steps take us through the streets surrounding St. Luke's, remembering His love for us in a powerful and moving way. The Via Dolorosa is re-created in the midst of the poor, with reflections from the Diary of St. Faustina.

2PM.....**Liturgy of the Passion**

Once again the power of the Cross and the reality of our Lord's terrible suffering is brought to light. Veneration of the Cross marks the solemn liturgy.

7PM.....**Divine Mercy Novena**

The start of our annual prayer for Divine Mercy culminates on the Feast of Divine Mercy one week from Easter Sunday. On this holy evening the Seven Last Words and Five Wounds of Christ are reflected upon in word and song...a beautiful way to remember our Lord's Passion.

### Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil

7PM.....**Divine Mercy Novena**

The journey continues with reflection and prayer.

9PM.....**Easter Vigil**

We are taught that the Mass is a taste of Heaven...at St. Luke's, the Easter Vigil is a BANQUET! Join us as we celebrate the joyous resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, as only St. Luke's can! This is NOT to be missed! Come prepared to sing, laugh, cry, and worship the risen Christ with your whole heart!

# The Divine Mercy Novena

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Friday, April 14 <sup>th</sup>    | <i>Fr. Jack Mattimore SJ &amp; Fr. Richard McAlear OMI</i><br>Our prayer: For all mankind, especially sinners    |
| Saturday, April 15 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>Fr. Jack Mattimore SJ &amp; Fr. Richard McAlear OMI</i><br>Our prayer: For the souls of priests and religious |
| Sunday, April 16 <sup>th</sup>    | <i>Fr. Jack Mattimore SJ</i><br>Our prayer: For all devout and faithful souls                                    |
| Monday, April 17 <sup>th</sup>    | <i>Fr. Dan Young</i><br>Our prayer: For those who do not believe in Jesus and for those who do not yet know Him  |
| Tuesday, April 18 <sup>th</sup>   | <i>Fr. Dennis Mancuso</i><br>Our prayer: For the souls of our separated brethren                                 |
| Wednesday, April 19 <sup>th</sup> | <i>Fr. Dennis Fronckowiak</i><br>Our prayer: For meek and humble souls and the souls of children                 |
| Thursday, April 20 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>Fr. Bill Quinlivan</i><br>Our prayer: For the souls who especially venerate and glorify Jesus' mercy          |
| Friday, April 21 <sup>st</sup>    | <i>Fr. Jacek Mazur</i><br>Our prayer: For the souls detained in Purgatory  |
| Saturday, April 22 <sup>nd</sup>  | <i>Fr. Jim Irving OMI</i><br>Our prayer: For souls that have become lukewarm                                     |

## Divine Mercy Sunday

1:00 pm Confessions

3:00pm Chaplet of Divine Mercy, 3:15 pm Mass

### From St. Faustina's Diary:

My daughter, tell the whole world about My Inconceivable mercy. I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy. **The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment.** [our emphasis] On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. Everything that exists has come forth from the very depths of My most tender mercy. Every soul in its relation to Me will I contemplate My love and mercy throughout eternity. The Feast of Mercy emerged from My very depths of tenderness. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter. Mankind will not have peace until it turns to the Fount of My Mercy. (Diary 699)

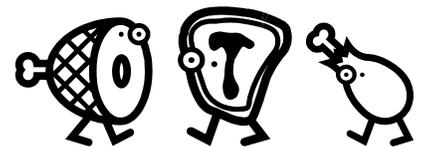


## Balloons and Tunes!

Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>  
6PM - 11PM

Good Shepherd Parish Hall  
Pendleton, NY

Featuring  
Karaoke with the  
Voices of Mercy,  
A HUGE Chinese  
Auction, lots to eat,  
And our first-ever  
MEAT RAFFLE!



Keep your eye out  
for a future  
mailing, and see  
you in Pendleton!



# "Praise the Lord!"



by Uncle Eddie Simon

"Praise and exalt Him above all forever." (Daniel Chapter 3). For who is like unto God, or who has known the mind of God. It's around midnight and things are kind of quiet. It's very cold out tonight but we're warm here inside what used to be the convent, a structure that was built and dedicated to God to further the work of the Kingdom of God. Its original purpose was, of course, to house a group of Felician nuns, a group of women who took sacred vows to serve God, to dedicate their lives to God; they certainly have done many good works. Tonight, as I gaze down the length of the fifty-foot hallway I find myself reflecting on how things have changed, and there is wonder in it all for me.

In my mind's eye I can see the nuns coming in and out of their bedrooms, getting ready to begin their busy day. I imagine the hallway looked much different then, very neat and orderly, perhaps a statue or two of a saint or maybe the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The fresh scents of recently mopped floors and cleansers used in the bathrooms and linens fresh from the laundry fill the air. The polite sounds of intermittent conversation are heard; "Good morning, Sister Anne," "Oh, good morning to you, too." Everyone would eventually find their way down to the chapel for prayer or perhaps Mass; a busy bee-hive of brown habits where coordinated activities give a sense of order and unity flavored with a feeling of holiness.

Finally my imaginary daydream begins to fade and my eyes begin to come into focus, shifting from a hallway that was to a hallway that is. It's quite a different hallway. The rooms are filled and the length of the hallway floor is lined with men wrapped up in a hodge-podge array of blankets from one end to the other and on both sides. The spaces between the men are dotted with plastic garbage bags containing their meager belongings. It doesn't smell very good and sometimes the words exchanged would've made the old nuns turn beet red and gasp! Each man is unique and yet they all share

something in common. They have all suffered somehow. Some have been wounded in love, and some have been wounded in hatred. Some have a sense of purpose and keep themselves busy, while some seem to wallow in the mire of a vague existence where true purpose seems perpetually elusive.

There is wonder in it all for me. The disheveled hobo who seems lost in the chaos of society and the dedicated nun so singular in purpose. Both have lived here. Both have walked these hallowed halls. Each one was conceived with an everlasting love in the eternally sacred mind of God before He even formed them in their mother's womb. We are all called to be Christ-like. Its easy to see Christ in a person who has led a life of prayer and service to God. What do we see when we look at the dirty, broken mess of men scattered across the hallway floor? Jesus said, "When I was homeless, you sheltered Me." Who has known the mind of god or who is like unto God? Praise and exalt Him above all forever. Amen.

*Eddie Simon's book, "Mercy Triumphs over Judgement", is a captivating spiritual journey through the first decade of ministry at St. Luke's, and is available at a Catholic book store near you or by calling St. Luke's at 894-4476.*





## Health Fair Begins Project Safety Net!

By David Marciniak

A huge Health Fair on January 28<sup>th</sup> inaugurated "Project Safety Net", St. Luke's program funded by the Fidelis Care Diocesan Grant Fund to identify and link with caregivers those in our community who have been diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, mental illness and pregnancy whose medical conditions are not being managed by a physician or other caregivers. Volunteer presenters from Mid-Erie Mental Health, The American Diabetes Association, Sisters Hospital, The Visiting Nurses Association, D'Youville Student Nurses Association, Erie County Health Department TB Program and St. Luke's own Our Lady of Good Remedy Clinic were present for nearly two hundred participants from the community. Everyone who participated received a gift of toiletries and personal items, and the kitchen provided a great meal to boot.

The Health Fair, a part of the identification phase of the program, yielded vital information about who needs continuing medical care in our community. Our next phase is to invite those needing care to information nights, complete with a delicious dinner and a great speaker, and to make the important referrals to caregivers.

Our next Health Fair is scheduled for June 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, complete with an outdoor bar-b-cue! See you there!

# The Convocation of Unity

"Unity is of the essence of the Church." (CCC: 813)



The Convocation of Unity is a monthly gathering of priests and lay members of the diocese for a period of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament – a diocesan Holy Hour! It is held the First Friday of each month at St. Joseph's Cathedral from 2PM to 4PM. St. Luke's wholeheartedly supports this wonderful endeavor and encourages everyone to make every effort to attend.

The purpose of the Convocation is to offer reparation and prayers for our priests, our Church, and our world. In his apostolic letter written for the Year of the Eucharist, Pope John Paul II wrote: "Let us take time to kneel before Jesus present in the Eucharist, in order to make reparation by our faith and love for the acts of carelessness and neglect, and even the insults which Our Savior must endure in many parts of the world."

The first hour, 2PM to 3PM, is for reparation for our sins. The second hour, 3PM to 4PM, is the hour of Great Mercy. Prayers of reparation, music interspersed with time for quiet meditation or reading of Scripture, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction will be a part of this time with Jesus. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available during the Hour of Mercy.

It is certainly a sacrifice to make time to attend – for any or all the prayer time – yet during these times of great strife great sacrifice is required. Those who are physically able are encouraged to fast until 4PM. In seeking to overcome the evil that has plagued our Church over the last several years we can receive guidance from Matthew 17:21 – after asking Jesus why they were unable to expel a demon, the apostles were told, "This kind does not leave without prayer and fasting."

Pope John Paul II of happy memory said, "Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human."

May the Convocation of Unity be a profound blessing for our diocese!

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*Sister Mary Desponsata Buczek* born 12/08/1914, died 3/2/2006



Often called the "founding inspiration" of St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, Sr. Mary Desponsata of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice (Felician Sisters) entered into her reward on March 2<sup>nd</sup> after a brief illness. "The Nun on the Bike", as she was affectionately known, would travel through the community surrounding St. Luke's Parish Convent where she lived with food and gifts for the neediest. She was loved by the people for her warm, charitable heart and devotion to God's children. "Sr. Despo", as she was affectionately known by her fellow sisters, was an enthusiastic supporter and prayer warrior for St. Luke's Mission of Mercy from its inception. We join the Felician community in prayer for this true bride of Christ!

# Parish Power!



St. Luke's Mission of Mercy is completely funded by the generous donations of individuals, parishes, groups, and corporations. We accept no funding from the government and receive no assistance from the Diocese of Buffalo. Over the years we have been amazed at the tremendous generosity of the people of Western New York! Our hearts are filled with gratitude as we remember our benefactors at mass and in prayer.

Though we could never list the many, many examples of selfless generosity shown to us daily, many ask "what can we do?" Here are ideas that might work for your parish or organization:

This year marks the third year Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Hamburg, NY under the direction of Pastor Fr. Mark Wolski has collected diapers, wipes, and other baby supplies for donation to the Baby Ministry at St. Luke's. Always needed and often in short supply during the lean winter months, this collection is a blessing to many needy mothers and children in our community. Thanks to the wonderful folks at Sts. Peter and Paul, from the "bottom" of our babies!

Annunciation Parish in Elma, under the direction of Fr. Emil Swiatek, has been assisting with food give-aways at St. Luke's for many, many years. They have been coming for so long and have a routine and system so refined that we just couldn't do it without them! In addition, Norman and Amy are invited each winter to speak at every Mass on a particular Sunday, and the congregation generously donates blankets, hats, gloves, and other winter needs.

Ann Postle's class at St. Gregory the Great School in Amherst adopted St. Luke's and has a collection of needed items every month! Attuned to the needs of the seasons, each collection is timely and appreciated. Thanks to the parents and kids who reach out and help those less fortunate!

Have we given you any ideas? There are many ways to help! Call the office at 894-4476 to talk to our staff on what is needed most at any particular time. We look forward to hearing from you! Remember, Amy and Norm are available to talk to your parish, so give them a call!



## The Queen of Peace House

By Michelle Marciniak

Three years ago Elaine Schmitt was an associate with some struggles in her personal life. In the midst of these struggles Elaine could see the blessings and decided to thank God for His goodness by making some changes in her life. She was divinely inspired to take a Mission-owned house, fix it up and give it back to God as a gift.

There were many houses to choose from. Elaine picked one just a couple doors down from the Mission, and the work began. Through the help of volunteers such as her dear friend Jeannie, her own personal finances and generous donations, she was able to proceed with the renovations. There were many problems, the worst being a caved-in ceiling due to water damage. Elaine moved in before it was completed so that she could work on the house as much as possible. (Shortly thereafter, in April of 2005 Elaine made her promises as a missionary). When she first moved in it was a two-family home, with an occupant in the upstairs apartment. After the upstairs tenant moved out she continued her renovations and changed the dwelling into a single family home. By now the house was becoming a "true" home with a name of its own: in honor of her conversion in 1999 in Medjugorje, Elaine decided to call it the "Queen of Peace" house. What made this home really special was that her workers were often the guys who lived in the shelter at the convent. They were drawn in by Elaine's love and respect for them. Like a "spiritual den mother" she would gather her "boys" and sit on the front porch to pray with them. Many times in warm weather you might drive by the Queen of Peace house and see the guys sitting on her front porch, talking and drinking the coffee that brews continuously for them. They are always respectful and follow a few simple rules that Elaine has set up for the house.

At first Elaine lived alone in the home but was soon joined by Molly, who helps run the kitchen at the Mission and who had been living on the first floor of the convent. Then came Tiffany and Mady. At

Christmas time, Teresa Mayer, another missionary, moved in to help Elaine. In early February, Joanne Heimiller, who is an associate discerning a call to the promises of Missionary life, also joined the household.

Right before Christmas the Queen of Peace house took in a refugee family deported from Canada. Dropped on our doorstep was an eight-and-a-half month pregnant mom, her four children and their grandmother. The house had its very own Christmas baby when Nathaniel David was born on December 20th. Shortly after, adequate housing was found for the family and they have become active members of the Mission who will be coming into the Catholic faith this Easter.

A second family of six arrived at the same time as Joanne, and they were housed until suitable arrangements could be made for them as well. Elaine has become an expert at furnishing houses for families!

Two more young women were added to the group early this winter. One has since moved, but the house remains open for whomever the Lord will send!

Elaine's vision for the home is still not complete. Renovations continue, and progress is being made every day. Elaine envisions gardens with fresh vegetables to help feed the community, and looks forward to expanding her yard as adjacent properties become available.

The Queen of Peace house has also hosted missionary gatherings and has become a place of welcome and hospitality. Hot breakfast sandwiches are often served from the front door, and many a cold wanderer has received a steaming cup of coffee. Not even Elaine could have imagined the important role the Queen of Peace House would play in the community surrounding St. Luke's, as a beacon of light in the darkness. It is a haven, a place of rest, and a center of peace.



*Our Lady, Queen of Peace,  
Pray for us.*

## FOSL NEWS

By Sharon Drabek

If anyone missed any of our FOSL events last year do not worry! This year there will plenty more. We had a record breaking Corn Roast in August, 2005, and if you missed it set your calendar for next August! Keep an eye out for information on "Balloons and Tunes" coming in April, and our annual "Tag Sale" slated for June 11.

These are just a few things on the calendar; there will be more to come. If anyone is interested in helping with these or any other of our fund raising events, or perhaps you have a great idea that could be used to raise money to help the Mission, please don't be shy—let us know. Come to one of our monthly meetings. We meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month at Infant of Prague on Cleveland Drive in Cheektowaga at 7PM in the green room.

## GENERATIONS OF FAITH

By Dave Topor

Our Generations of Faith religious education program has been a real blessing here at St. Luke's. Once a month GOF brings families together to grow in some aspect of our Catholic Faith. This year we are examining the meaning of the Creed. During our January meeting we were looking at the line in the Creed that states that we "believe in Jesus Christ...born of the Virgin Mary." We were exploring the coming of the three kings to adore the Christ child. Roxana Lopez, a refugee applicant from El Salvador, prayerfully depicted our Blessed Mother, while her son Mannie played Joseph. Roxanna's newborn son, Nathaniel (born December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005) played the Christ child.

Tyler Marciniak, Jonathan Franco, and Rashaan Mallory did a beautiful job portraying the deep devotion that the tree wisemen had for our newborn Savior. They processed to Jesus, and presented

Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This representation of the first Christmas most definitely recaptured the profound wonder and awe of those who experienced first hand the coming of Jesus into our troubled world.

Afterwards, we were all the beneficiaries of a wonderful spaghetti dinner prepared by Molly Dennybogdan and her crew. Following dinner, the young people went to their classrooms for age-appropriate catechesis. The adults stayed in the cafeteria and watched excerpts from the movie, "Jesus of Nazareth". Fr. Jack Mattimore led discussion on how suffering is part of the call of following Jesus Christ. A music video by Fr. Stan Fortuna deepened our appreciation of the inevitability of human suffering in every person's life.

As families were leaving, we presented them with a take-home packet complete with a CD and instructional activities. The CD is created each month to reinforce and expand upon what is learned at our get-togethers. It features music by the Voices of Mercy and other artists. The CD also uses narration and scripture readings to instruct listeners in the truths of our Catholic Faith.

GOF is a real gift to St. Luke's Mission of Mercy because it gives our families the opportunity to learn together the "height and the depth and breadth of God's love for us, which surpasses all understanding."



## JUNIOR ASSOCIATES

By Dave Topor

The Junior Associates are continuing their study of the Gospel of Matthew. Once a month we meet to delve into what our Lord is teaching us through Matthew. We have seen that Matthew is showing his original Jewish audience that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, that is, the Christ. More than any of the other gospel writers, Matthew takes great pains to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of all Jewish Old Testament prophecy. We will continue to work our way through this wonderful account of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We were also privileged to partake in the wonderful production of C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe". During Christmas week Emily and Elizabeth Marciniak, Crystal Brown, Erica Cornavaca, Mark Simon and Susie Bignell went to see this great movie that faithfully brings to life Lewis' allegory about the Christian faith, and about the incredible sacrifice that Jesus Christ endured for our salvation. All present deeply enjoyed this movie.

The Junior Associates volunteered at "Meet St. Luke's Night" at St. Andrew's Church in November. They also helped out with our annual "Soup-er Chili Knights" at the Hamburg K of C in January. At this most recent fundraiser Emily and Elizabeth Marciniak, Crystal Brown, Mark Simon, Jeremiah Franco, and Brittany Gibbons professionally manned the "pop booth".

These functions allowed our young people to serve our St. Luke's community, and to have fun in doing so. They will continue to help out at fund-raisers whenever possible. Please pray for our Junior Associates so they will continue following the Merciful Jesus at home, in school, and with friends. They are doing a great job, and they are a blessing to all of us!



# The Voices of Mercy



## Busy Season Highlighted by Ministry with Fr. McAlear

By Dennis Gilhoolley

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. God has been very good to the Voices of Mercy during the past year and has bestowed many graces and blessings upon us. Advent was wonderful with several Advent Festivals of Praise that gave us an opportunity to minister with some songs that we ordinarily do not do at other times of the year, including "Find Us Ready", and a new song called "You are Holy", which has all the makings of a great praise song for all seasons for some time to come. The congregations really seem to enjoy it and sing their hearts out, which is always a great blessing for the ministers of music to experience. The Christmas Season also saw a successful "Sing-Along" Christmas Festival of Praise at the Fatima Shrine. One of the blessings that God has brought out of that ministry is a contract for December 15<sup>th</sup> of 2006 to give a Christmas concert at the Lancaster Opera House. God is truly good to us!

2006 is also off to a very busy and blessed start. January saw the Voices of Mercy along with Amy Betros and Sue Gilhoolley head down to Marco Island and Naples, Florida for a week of ministry and healing with Fr. Richard McAlear OMI. We ministered at healing masses at three different parishes; we ministered at a day retreat at Ave Maria University and did a healing mass ministry at St. John Neumann High School. We have been ministering with Fr. McAlear in Florida for several years now, and each trip is always different and always special in its own way. The highlight this year was our ministry to the youth at St. John Neumann High School. It was incredible to see those teenagers touched by Jesus as He, in the Eucharist, was placed in the monstrance for adoration. Even before prayers for healing had begun, you could see the presence of Jesus: body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist, begin to touch all those who were there. Those of us who have been to Franciscan University's summer youth conferences remarked how similar it was to their special "Saturday Night" of adoration. God never ceases to amaze us at how much He loves His children (of all ages)

and how powerfully He touches our hearts. As always, we are humbled and blessed to be a small part of His ministry.

We look forward to a busy and wonderful Lent which leads right into the holiest time of the Church Liturgical Year: the Sacred Triduum and Easter. We cannot wait to see what God has in store and all that He will do for His people.

"Natural religious instinct urges man to honor God by means of music as well as by the other arts, and to heighten his religious exaltation by joyous singing."

-Catholic Encyclopedia on  
Ecclesiastic Music

*Check our web site  
calendar to see where the  
Voices of Mercy will be next!*

[www.stlukesmissionofmercy.org](http://www.stlukesmissionofmercy.org)

