SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FALL EDITION 2021 Volume 16 Issue 1

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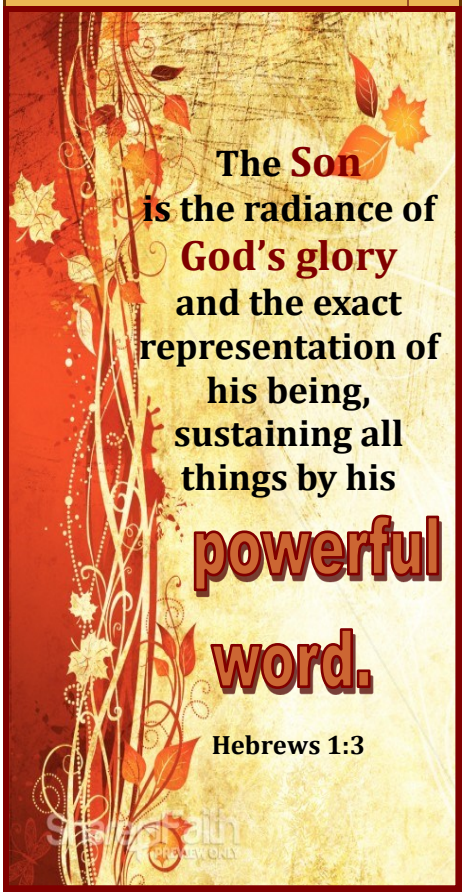


Finding God in the Changing Seasons

"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."
Genesis 8:22

This verse from the book of Genesis reassures us that the seasons will come and go but the presence of God is constant and never ceases to be actively engaged in every moment of our existence. Like the seasons of the year, our life is forever evolving and changing. There are times when life offers us sorrow, loss, challenge, and disappointment or the opposite–joy, success, growth, happiness. We need not fear these changing and challenging times for we walk not alone.

In Hebrews 13:8 we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. These are encouraging words that comfort us no matter what season of life we may be encountering. Every daily experience presents us with another opportunity to grow into the person God desires us to be. Various seasons have unique and wonderful revelations that help us to understand the goodness of our God. These seasons present opportunities for discernment and transformation.

When we use our senses and observe the changes taking place in each season of the year and the various seasons of our life, we are drawn into a reflective and decerning state. We begin to observe, see, and experience God's presence in the most ordinary tasks or events of the day.

God will never cease to be in control of every season of our life. He knows far better than we what is best for us. He reminds us in the scriptures that there is a time for everything. It is not easy to accept that everything includes good times, as well as, hard and painful times. All seasons are meaningful and good if we are able to believe the divine plan for our lives. Everything that God does, or allows us to experience, is for our good. Therefore, we must trust, be patient and open to receive whatever God offers to us. It is only then that we lift our hearts in songs expressing glory and praise to our loving God.

As we move from one season to the next, let us not fear the changes that God may be asking of us. Let us trust that God only desires the best for us. We simply need to learn to wait patiently for the growth and transformation process to reach completion.

"Don't be impatient for the Lord to act! Keep traveling steadily along his pathway and in due season he will honor you with every blessing."

Psalm 37:34

Summer Donations

Mr. James Cole	$300.00
Mrs. Judith Paquin	$40.00
Mr. & Mrs. James Lafferty	$35.00
Mrs. Lillian Mandeville	$100.00
Mrs. Tamara Miller	$1,000.00
Dr. Ronald Perciaccante	$25.00
Mrs. Linda Piddock	$25.00
Mrs. Rosanne Laverty	$30.00 in memory of Mrs. Mary Jane Deline
Ms. Constance Dowling	$25.00 in memory of Paul and Martha Dowling
Mrs. & Mrs. Joseph Rich	$100.00 in memory of Mrs. Mary Jane Deline
First Presbyterian Church	$1,200.00

We appreciate your support !

The IHC students volunteered their time and talent to benefit the Special Religious Education program for people with disabilities. Mrs. Powell knew that Covid prevented the annual fund raiser to be held by the participants of the program. We appreciate the kindness of the IHC students which yielded $1,012.68 in support of the program.

Ready to serve! Catechists for 2021-2022

On September 23, 2021, the catechists of the Special Religious Education Program held their first staff meeting. The main portion of the meeting focused on the role of the catechist and their ministry in the Church. The meeting began with a Prayer Service led by Sister Diane Marie, SSJ. Sister then showed a short video entitled: Out of the Shadows: Disabilities and the Church. The emphasis of Pope Frances' message dealt with the importance of inclusion for all of God's people. He stated that, "Parishes need to be inclusive or shut their doors." This statement generated a worthwhile discussion among the members of the staff.

The first reaction to the Pope's message sparked a conversation around the mission statement for the Special Religious Education program. Reviewing the mission statement we agreed that inclusion was an important feature of our program. However, we asked ourselves how do we encourage our participants and their families to become more actively involved in the life of their parish Church. We all agreed that this was an area we could work at improving this year. Ideas were shared on how we might achieve this goal. The participants of our program have much to offer the Church. Their love for Jesus is sincere. So don't be surprised if you see one of our people with disabilities greet you on Sunday morning, serve on the altar, or even proclaim the Word.

During our sessions this year we hope to strengthen our relationship with and love for Jesus. Our study of the scriptures will center around the names by which Jesus is known in the New Testament. By praying with the names of Jesus we will hope to move beyond knowing *about* Jesus to deeply *knowing* Jesus and allowing him to touch our hearts. When Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?", we will be able to please Jesus with our answer.

Back row: Beverly Williams, Deborah Cavallario, Sarah Schantz, Rose VanEpps, David Liscomb, Patrick Bates, and Alice Busler

Front row: Julie Gould, Jessica Ann Hanlin, Amanda Morgan, Colleen Schraenkler

Absent: Judy Fraser, Sister Angelica Rebello SCC

Watertown Catechetical Board
Religious Education Office for People with Disabilities
est. 1972

Mission Statement

Jesus' mission on earth was all-inclusive. He desired his Father's love be known and experienced by all. The Religious Education Program for People with Disabilities provides spiritual enrichment and opportunities for personal growth which nurture their steadfast faith in God.

-The Watertown Catechetical Board

Watertown Catechetical Board Members 2021—2022

Pastors

Rev. John "Mickey" Demo

Rev. Frank Natale MSC

Program Coordinator

Sr. Diane Marie Ulsamer, SSJ

Christian Formation Coordinators

Sr. Angelica Rebello SSC

Sr. Constance Marie Sylver

Parish Representative

Thomas Reff

Michael Deline - **President**

Andrea Garrabrant—**Vice-President**

Michele Capone

Committee Chairperson

Sarah Schantz

Secretary

Antoinette Vallone

Special Religious Education Committee Members 2021-2022

Janice Phelps

Sarah Schantz –**Chairperson**

Francis Scovel

Gary West

Cathy Deline–**Vice-Chairperson**

Sister Diane Marie

Kim West

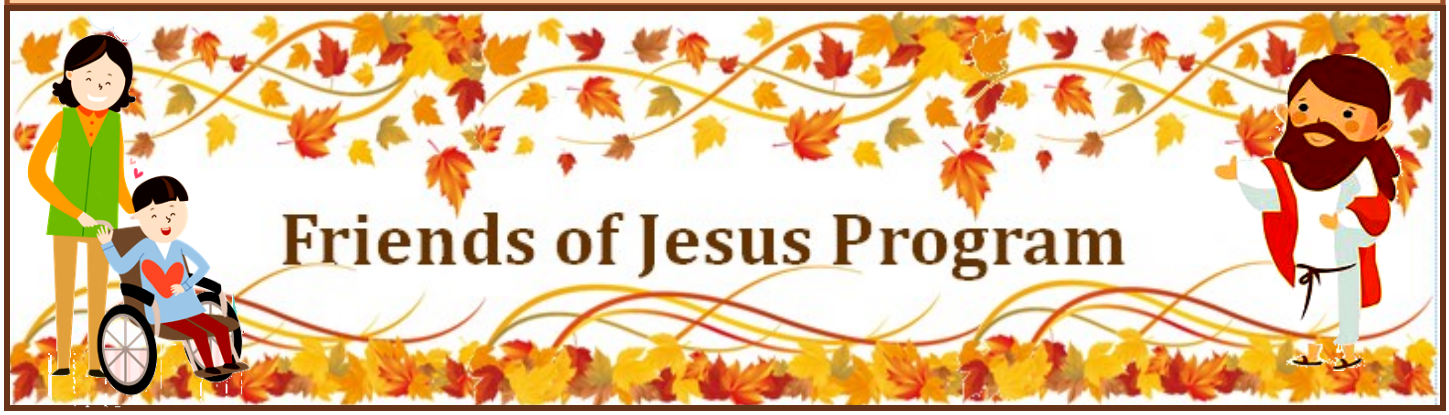
Jessica Ann Hanlin

Alice Busler

Judy Geng

Joanne Lavarnway

Absent: Stephanie Moore



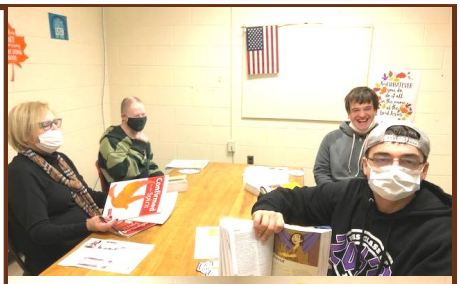
The last Saturday in September was a joyful day for the participants of the Friends of Jesus program. We were able to return to the old St. Patrick's school for our weekly sessions.

We started the new year with Mass in the chapel. Father Frank Natale was the celebrant. Jeffrey Deline served on the altar and Anderson Stenard and Jennifer Crowner were lectors. Everyone entered into prayer with eager participation and voices calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide them as they entered into another year of study.

After the Mass, we all took a trip around the building which is now the site for Religious Education for the new Blessed Sacrament Church. For the first time, our program participants will have their own rooms where each small group sessions will be held. This is a wonderful gift for our catechists who can now leave their materials and create their own sacred space for their group to meet each week.

Not being able to meet in person for a whole year was hard on our participants. Last year's ZOOM sessions kept us in contact with one another but we all missed the personal touch of the on site sessions.

New staff and a new look at our old site has created an energy that shouts out, "It is great to be back!" Being together to celebrate our faith and lift our hearts in praise of the God who loves us brings new life to our Religious Education Program.



Jesus Asked,

"Who do you say that I am?"

You are the power of light who will lead us to heaven.

Jesus you are the one who helps me not to be afraid. I know you will bring me to heaven.

You are the one who is always looking after me.

You are Christ—you know how everyone feels. You don't judge me but you help me to be a better person. You are the Savior of the whole world.

During one of our recent sessions, I ask the participants to think about how they would answer the question Jesus asked his apostles. These are their responses.

Jesus you are the Lord my God. You take care of my grandmother and grandfather in heaven.

Jesus you are Emmanuel who loves me and will never stop loving me.

Jesus, I think you are love and you hug me and make me feel happy.

You are the one who prays for the Sisters of St. Joseph.