

A Time to Reflect, Repent, and Renew

As we enter into this sacred time of the liturgical season, I find myself reflecting upon this gift, that each year the Church weaves into our journey of faith. The word lent means “spring,” a time to bring forth a freshness to our faith journey with the Lord. I like to think about Lent as a time to spring into action, striving to remove anything in my life that prevents me from growing in holiness. The Church encourages us to pray, sacrifice, and give alms. Certainly engaging in these three practices will bring about a spiritual growth, keep one grounded and healthy, and definitely lead to a deeper awareness of the presence of God in the ordinary events of the day.

As a child, I dreaded the season of Lent. It meant that there would be no candy or sweets, long hours attending Lenten Church services, praying the family rosary and the Friday afternoon stations of the cross which seemed, at the time, to last forever. Isn't it amazing how time manages to change one's attitude and perspective? Today, I actually look forward to the season of Lent, as a time of celebration. Just as spring cleaning gives one a fresh look and an uplifted spirit, so too the season of Lent, when viewed with the proper attitude and a deep spirit of gratitude, renewed energy penetrates the soul.

The participants of the Special Religious Education program focus on the season with a special Lenten Prayer Service, Liturgy, and a day of retreat. In addition, each season we collect money weekly to be given to a charity of our choice. We talked about some of the things that we can give up or let go of, so that we can grow in our relationship with Jesus. Our discussions focus on letting go of fears, anger, jealousy, and negative attitudes, replacing them with a spirit of hope, trust, and love. Jesus told us that we must love one another. Lent is a time to look at ways that we can share love with others. Our Lenten practices begin a new phase of our spiritual journey which continues beyond the season of Lent. We want to make prayer, sacrifice, and sharing our love with others, a way to grow in holiness, leading us into a deeper relationship with our Savior, Jesus.

Celebration can take many forms. The people with disabilities are eager to journey together throughout this holy season and celebrate the many blessings we receive every day. Our reflection on the passion of Jesus, our times of prayer, our desire to share what we have with others and our deep longing for friendship with Jesus, truly gives us something to celebrate. The consensus in the group is that our Lenten journey will surely help us to become true disciples of Jesus. As we celebrate Lent, we are reminded of the importance of recalling our Baptismal promises and our commitment as children of our loving God. His Son gave his life for us. In these next forty days, we pray that our reflection, repentance, and renewal, will draw us closer to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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Return to the Lord with your whole heart.

40 days of Lent



May you find peace and love at the feet of Jesus...

Have a blessed Season of Lent!



Old Mc Donald Has A Farm



On May 16th the participants of the program will be boarding a bus heading for Old Mc Donald's Farm. Our sessions this year focused on coming to know God by learning several names given to God by the people of the Old Testament. In the first book of Genesis, God was known as Elohim—God, Mighty Creator. We learned how God provide for His people, protected, and promised He would be with us always.

Our bus ride will take us to the great village of Sackets Harbor where we will visit 200 animals that our Creator God provides for us here in the North Country. We could travel outside of the area but why do that when we have wonderful sites of nature right here in our own area?

The day will begin with a short prayer helping us to recall the goodness of God and to celebrate the beginning of a day to observe, appreciate, and enjoy the variety of animals, trees, flowers, and plants around the farm. In addition to enjoying the animals and other forms of nature, we will tour the milking parlor, enjoy a hayride, play miniature golf, visit the gift shop, and— best of all— enjoy lunch at the Lazy Cow Cafe.

One of the goals this year was to help our participants become aware of the amazing God-given gifts that we take for granted every day. This one day adventure will give us numerous opportunities to praise God for these many blessings. Getting up close to a cow, pig, goat, or llama and observing the animals first hand is more exciting than simply seeing them in the pasture as we drive through the country side.



Many of our participants are not able to take a long trip so we hope that this backyard experience will be an exciting, enjoyable, and enriching day to remember. Look for pictures of our visit in the June Newsletter.

Watertown Catechetical Board Members

- Michael Deline - **President**
- Rev. John M. Demo
- Rev. Christopher Looby - **Vice President**
- Rev. Jonas Tandayu MSC
- Sr. Diane Marie Ulsamer SSJ
- Julie Gould - **Committee Chairperson**
- Elizabeth Bamann - St. Patrick's
- Sister Angelica Rebello SCC - Holy Family
- Sr. Sahayarani Selvaraj SCC- St. Anthony's
- Sr. Constance Marie Sylver SSJ—OLSH
- Thomas Reff - Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
- Michael Deline – St. Patrick's
- Andrea Garrabrant - Holy Family
- Randy Belina - St. Anthony's
- Antoinette Vallone - **Secretary**



Christmas donations from the following friends...

Anonymous	\$700.00
Tom and Nancy DeLosh	\$200.00
Judith Paquin	\$ 30.00
Ted & Mary Mascott	\$200.00
Alice McDermott	\$ 50.00
James & Claire Lafferty	\$ 25.00
Bill & Joyce Jesmore	\$100.00
Margaret White	\$100.00
Mildred Squier	\$ 50.00

Your support of our program is most appreciated.



Blessed Be the Name of the Lord.

One of the activities for our lesson on the Name of God was to have each group compose a prayer, poem, or letter to God. Here are a few examples from three of the Interfaith groups.

Abba, Father, we praise your Holy Name. You are our Healer and Savior.

Thank you Lord, for all you do for us. The world you created, your healing power, love, compassion, and forgiveness.

God forgive us for not always praying even though we know you love us. Forgive us when we doubt. We know that we should always trust in you, God.

Help us to never turn away but trust that you are always with us. We pray this prayer in your Name God. Amen

*Thanks
for being the
Heavenly Father*



Composed by: David, Nalanie, Sandra, Kathy, Francis, Julia and Catechist: Tammy Miller

Dear God in Heaven,

Thank you God for the gift of healing and listening to us. Thank you for times that we can spend with family.

God you make us happy!

We ask you to strengthen us to live in your ways.

We bless you God and say, Amen.



From: Rebecca, Kevin, Eliza, Jennifer and Catechists: Colleen Schraenkler and Alice Busler

Dear Almighty God,

We are writing this letter to thank you for giving us life, family, jobs, and our freedom.

Help us keep our room clean and take care of our parents.

We praise you Lord for making our dreams come true. We praise you for giving us heaven. We praise you for being our companion. We praise you for loving us.

God we are asking you to help us to be more like you, to be more independent and responsible.

God, please forgive us for the times that we were angry and disrespectful to others.



From: Scott, Rosemary, Erica, Molly, Danna Lee and Catechists: Cathy Chirico and Sandra McKee

Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration

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Prayer

Year after year, the Thanksgiving Dinner is one of our most enjoyable events. I believe holidays have a way of bringing a special blessing to our hearts. Everyone looks forward to gathering for this celebration.

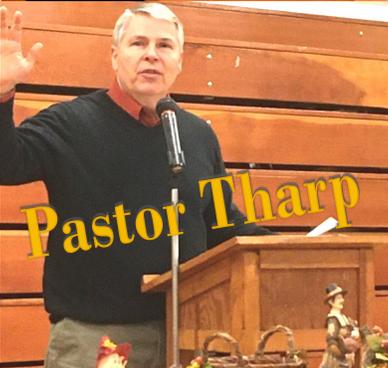


Volunteer Servers



Thanksgiving Proclamation

This year a few of the participants were especially excited because their pastors accepted our invitation to dinner. Pastor Robert Tharp and his wife from the Life Church of the Nazarene, and Pastor Jeffrey E. Smith from the First Baptist Church, were our special guests for the night.



Pastor Tharp

Pastor Tharp spoke to the group about being grateful even when we are faced with sad or painful situations. His brief but thought-provoking presentation reminded us of the value of living with a grateful heart.



Door Prize Winner

We especially thank Cindy Swan and the staff at Memories Catering for the delicious turkey dinner that we all enjoyed.

As you can see, every aspect of the night put smiles on our face and joy in our hearts.



Guest

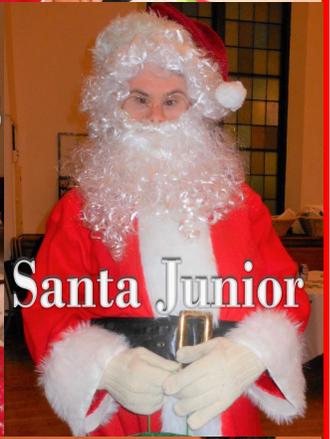


Families



Singers

Christmas Celebration



What does the Season of Lent mean to you?

The Season of Lent



Here are a few responses to the above question asked of the participants of the program.

- † Nalanie: Lent is 40 days with no meat on Friday. Then there is Easter.
- † Francis: Lent is a time to be with everybody and go to church.
- † Kathy: Lent is a time of healing and a time to show God your love. It is a special time for healing body and soul.
- † David: Lent means a time to clean up our souls and to repent of our wrong doings. It is time to do special things to let others know that you care.
- † Rebecca: Lent is when you give up something to lose weight, so that you can stay healthy. God wants us to stay healthy.
- † Kevin: Lent is a time when you can help others and stay active doing things.
- † Eliza: Lent is a time for spring cleaning, spending time with God, and reading his Word.



Lent is a time to change and grow closer to Jesus.