



ST. JAMES NETWORK

Fall 2010

A publication of
**St. James
Catholic Church**
Liberty, Mo.

Parish studies 'seat and feet' needs

by Fr. Tom Albers, C.P.P.S., Pastor

A COUPLE MONTHS ago, the parish bulletin included an informal survey to gauge interest in establishing a "seat and feet" fund leading to new pews and flooring in the church, due to the deteriorating condition of our current pews and carpeting. Recently, one of the pews cracked in three places, and I am told several other pews will also need replacement. The padding on the seats is long gone, and the cloth covering is badly stained on many pews. The carpet is now 29 years old!

The reality is that the new church we are considering building will be quite a few years down the road, pending enough money to begin. Meanwhile, perhaps we could get new pews that would serve a new church as well, and put down a floor that would also serve in a remodeled parish hall. Thus, the survey.

Survey says...

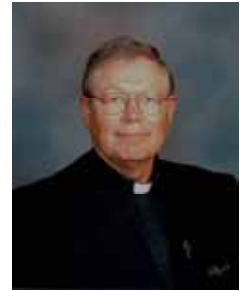
Sixty-eight surveys were returned. The breakdown of responses is:

- Get new pews without cloth padding (42).
- Get new pews with cloth padding (6).
- Get new flooring with carpeting (5).
- Get new flooring without carpeting (23).
- Get new flooring with aisle carpeting only (22).
- Forget the whole thing, and concentrate on more parking instead (0).
- In addition to "seat and feet," add on a parking lot as well (9).

- Wait another year or two, and let's see what happens (13).

Comments were also solicited. Here is a sample of responses:

- People just don't have the money. Fix what is broken only.
- New pews if we can do it through fundraising without borrowing. Wait for the parking lot. We, the church, should not borrow any more money.
- Wait until such time as the debt is paid off; limit expenditures to "repairs only."
- Wait on flooring. Anywhere you bolt down pews would leave a hole in floor. Kind of hard to have a nice floor for a social hall if it's full of holes.
- Let's live with it, and start from scratch when we can afford it.
- I feel this is an important and most-needed goal!
- Money is tight, so don't spend any foolishly. A new church is highest priority.
- Let's do what is necessary right now and concentrate most of our resources on getting into our new church.
- I'm happy to hear [the pews are] in the planning stage. We need new pews. Our parish is so blessed to have so many children that we feel that pews without padding are the best plan.



Fr. Tom Albers

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Service to others allows our hearts to be changed for the better

by Fr. Timothy Armbruster, C.P.P.S.,



Fr. Timothy Armbruster

“HEY MOM, WHAT’S for dinner?” we asked each night. And each night we would get the same answer, “Food, now sit down and eat.” We never worried about our next meal.

But for some, there may not always be a next meal.

During my years of initial formation and college, Br. Robert Herman invited me to join him and others in serving at St. James Soup Kitchen in Kansas City. After a few months, I knew most of our guests and was able to greet them by name. After I was ordained and returned to the Kansas City area, I continued to help serve when possible. I even invited various groups of students from the parish to join me at times.

Have a meal with friends

One night I was asked to help supervise because a school from outside the city wanted to bring students to experience a soup kitchen. Once the students arrived, we gave out the assignments and put the students to work serving the meal. All was going well until I heard a student say, “Why are all you blacks here? Why can’t you go elsewhere and get something to eat!?”

I was horrified, to say the least. I dropped what I was doing and ran to the line. But before I could get there, the gentleman who was next in line to receive a meal calmly said, “Look young man — Yes I am black, yes I have money in my pocket, yes I could go else-

where and buy a hamburger. But I come here to have a meal with my friends.” The teacher then grabbed the student and yanked him out of the line as I grabbed his spoon and continued to serve. Later, when the line quieted down, I spoke with the teacher, and she apologized over and over. We finished the night with no further trouble.

A complete turnaround

One week later, I received a call from the principal asking me, “What did you do to this kid?” I wasn’t sure what she was asking, as I had not said anything to this kid. She continued: “He has done a complete turnaround. He was the class bully, Mr. I-don’t-care-you-are-not-gonna-tell-me-what-to-do kid.” I told her again I didn’t do anything. “Well whatever happened there, he was changed, and for the better. Thank you,” she said. She went on to tell me that the boy was now a model student and very respectful of others.

One month later, I was asked again to help because that same school was coming back again to serve. When the students arrived, I saw that same young man again, and thought, “Oh great!” However, he came up to me and apologized for his actions and asked if he could help serve. The students took their places, and we began to serve.

When that same gentleman he had encountered the last time came through the line, the student asked if he could have a tray of food to eat. He took his tray and went to the table and asked,



Parishioners Urban Miller, Lou Carey and Hermann Schmidt volunteer their time at St. James Soup Kitchen. The parish serves at St. James in Kansas City, Mo., on the fourth Monday of each month. For information about volunteering, contact Urban at 781-3114.

“May I sit and eat dinner with you?” The man graciously accepted. I could not believe it. I kept thinking, “Is this the same kid? It can’t be.” But it was.

Lessons learned

That experience that night taught each of us a lesson that we could never learn in any book. The boy experienced firsthand what it means to serve one another and to respect another person right where they are in life. I thank God that the gentleman, our guest, was able to remain calm and speak the words that needed to be spoken. How easily that night could have been a disaster.

To talk about serving is one thing. To actually take the time to do it, is something else. When we encounter others and see Christ in a stranger, our hearts are forever changed. Are we willing to serve and allow our hearts to be changed?

St. James parishioners help feed the hungry at St. Mary's Food Kitchen

by Toni Ferro-Arthur, Editor

FOR I WAS HUNGRY and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water...

— *Matthew 25:35*

Volunteers at St. Mary's Food Kitchen have heeded Jesus' call by feeding the poor and the homeless 365 days a year for the past 25 years. Twenty-six churches and five synagogues participate. Each has its own day to provide a meal. Together they have served more than 3 million meals.

On the fourth Sunday of each month, St. James parishioners provide the food and workers to serve an average of 400 people. During the past 21 years that St. James has participated, the parish has cooked, served and paid for more than 168,000 meals.

"We make a point to always serve a full meal of meat, potatoes or pasta, bread, vegetable, fruit, salad, and dessert," says Don Ollier, who leads the St. James effort. "At Christmas and Easter we go all out with a special menu fitting

the holiday. The feedback we get from the people we serve lets us know they appreciate it when St. James serves."

On the parish's day to serve, we are responsible for providing all the food and workers. In addition, St. James is assessed \$450 each month by St. Mary's to cover our share of the overhead of the building, plus the milk, plates, utensils, etc. needed to serve the meals.

"The parish participates in the government commodities program to the fullest extent possible, and through the years this has been an enormous help in holding down our food expenses," Don says. "However, cutbacks in this source are becoming so severe that our monthly out-of-pocket expenses are increasing dramatically."

If you would like to make a cash donation to the program or volunteer to cook or serve, contact Don at (816) 792-4710, or look for him at the sign-up table on the third weekend of each month in the narthex after Masses.

St. Mary's Food Kitchen is housed in the Wilhelmina Gill Service Center, 645 Nebraska Ave., Kansas City, Kan.



Glen Ahlfield, Herman Schmidt and Don Ollier are three of the dedicated St. James volunteers at St. Mary's Food Kitchen in Kansas City, Kan.

> Parish studies 'seat and feet' needs

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Careful consideration is key

As part of studying the feasibility of new pews, we are soliciting estimates from pew companies, which could approach \$120,000. In addition, we have received an estimated cost of recovering and re-padding the present pews, and carpeting the floor. This comes to about \$37,000.

At this time we are simply gathering more information. Several more pew companies will be contacted. More dis-

cussions and meetings will follow, perhaps more surveys. A decision on this is sometime down the road.

We cannot be in a hurry. There is still 1½ years remaining on the current campaign to reduce debt; this is our first priority. The survey results do highlight certain realities, however. For example:

- We don't have to rush a decision.
- There is no guarantee that new pews at this time would be suitable for a future church.

- The economy is still making it difficult for many of our parishioners to consider significant contributions for major projects.

- There will be other pressing needs in coming years to which we must respond, such as repairing the church roof or improving parking.

We will continue to research other possibilities, but at this time we will be slow to move forward until more information can guide us.

Changes come to St. James Religious Education program

by Cecilia Richardson,
Director, Religious Education



Cecilia Richardson

MANY OF US remember what parish religious education — “CCD” — programs were like when we were kids. It was for the few children not enrolled in parochial schools, and it

mainly taught the basics of Catechism.

That’s all the program needed to accomplish because most families at that time lived in Catholic enclaves — with Catholic neighbors, Catholic friends and social lives that revolved around the parish church. Parents in those days had the support of the community to reinforce Catholic values.

Not so any more. Most of us live in neighborhoods and have friends of multiple faith traditions, and our children are enrolled in the public school system in much higher percentages. We don’t have the support our parents had.

Now we expect our parish Religious Education programs to teach not only the catechism, but also what it means to live a Catholic life. That’s a tall order,

especially when we only have 28 weeks of class time.

Parent input is key

Last spring, we sent out a questionnaire to Religious Education families asking for their thoughts on how well our Religious Education program was working and what they wanted it to accomplish. With their input in hand, we spent the summer working on revamping the curriculum into seven major objectives for each grade level.

Based on parents’ ranking of what was important to them for their child to learn, we added or removed emphasis on items, included a stronger rationale for service, added a Take Your Class to Mass program in which students attend a Sunday morning Mass together, and encouraged student participation at Mass through the use of “Magnifikid” missalettes.

In addition, using what we have learned during our summer Vacation Bible School programs, and with the help of Lori Tajchman, our children’s choir director, we have also added an opening prayer and music component at the start of every class session. The



Kids in the Religious Education program open each class session with 15 minutes of prayer and song.

songs help teach our learning objectives and are fun for the kids to sing.

Our hope is that we can use every tool we have to help the children learn our seven major objectives. For example, one goal is to help fifth graders become more familiar with the Bible, and Lori has a song that teaches the books of the Bible in order.

A step in the right direction

This is all a work-in-progress, but we think it’s a step in the right direction. Feedback from parents and our volunteer catechists has been supportive, so far. All are welcoming the changes and anxious to see what better collaboration between classroom and family can do.

We welcome any suggestions along the way. Doing things in a new way requires a leap of faith, and we’re blessed to have a parish that supports our work and is willing to take that leap with us.

Want to help?

If you would like to help supply new teaching materials for the St. James Religious Education program, visit www.Amazon.com, and:

1. Click on “Gifts & Wish Lists” at the top of the page.
2. Enter “St. James RE” in the blue box on the right side of the page that opens, and press “Go.” Click on “St. James RE Program.”
3. Scan the list, and make your purchases.

Amazon will ship your purchases directly to the church. *Thank you!*

Nursery enables parents to enjoy quiet prayer during Masses

by Loretta Shea Kline, Contributing Editor

PARENTS OF CHILDREN 18 months to 5 years old have a chance to enjoy quiet time for prayer and reflection during Mass thanks to the parish's Sunday Nursery.

The nursery service is available for the 9:15 and 11 a.m. Sunday Masses. Parents can participate in Mass with peace of mind, knowing their children are well-cared-for and having fun.

Director Sue Harrison has been caring for children through the parish's nursery service for 10 years.

"I really enjoy it," Sue says. "I love them. They become a family. They call me Miss Sue. Some of them call me Grandma, which is all right."

Plenty of help; plenty to do

The nursery is located in the social hall, and the service is free. Parents sign their children in about 15 minutes before Mass and sign them out when Mass is over. Some prefer to pick their children up at Communion time, so they can bring them along for a blessing.

Sue typically has help from a youth assistant age 16 or older, and she also welcomes youth helpers, preferably ages 13 and older. Youth interested in helping with the ministry should look for Sue at the nursery on Sunday morning.

The nursery is well-stocked with donated toys and books. Sue and her youth helpers play with the children, read to them and give them loving care.

If there are not too many people in the narthex during Mass, Sue will sometimes take the preschool-age children to dip their fingers in the holy water font and make the sign of the cross. On nice



Lisa Richardson, youth assistant, (far left) and Sue Harrison, director of the Sunday Nursery, (back), with help from Julia (front, in pink) and Katie (in green) DeClue, youth helpers, take care of the children in our parish at the Sunday Nursery during the 9:15 and 11 a.m. Masses so their parents can concentrate on their prayer time.

days, she might take them out to the prayer garden to say the Hail Mary and Our Father.

"They learn a little something besides play," Sue says.

Toddlers enjoy going with Sue to see the fish in the school hall on occasion.

When it's time for Communion in church, Sue has the children help pick up the toys and then they all sit down, make the sign of the cross and have a snack of animal crackers.

'It's a joy'

The hour goes by quickly for everyone, especially for the children who might have a hard time sitting still for an hour or more at Mass. Parents can rest assured that if their child needs them at any time, Sue or a helper will bring the child to them at Mass, though she does what she can to soothe them first.

One part of being involved in the ministry that Sue especially enjoys is when children she has cared for through the years come back to visit and tell her how they're doing in school. She also enjoys seeing her youth assistants and helpers grow in their abilities to care for and guide the children.

In all, Sue loves being part of the ministry. "It's a joy," she says.

For more information about the Sunday Nursery, call Sue at (816) 781-4476.

Sunday Nursery
is available in the social hall
during the
9:15 and 11 a.m. Masses
for children ages
18 months to 5 years old.

Glory Be Tea helps women of the parish prepare for Christmas

by Toni Ferro-Arthur, Editor

FOR THE EIGHTH year in a row, ladies of the parish have a special way to get in the spirit of Christmas. The Glory Be Tea, held on the second Sunday in December (Dec. 12 this year), provides a day to renew the spiritual focus of Christmas for women of faith. It is for adult women only, ensuring participants can focus on themselves, rather than others during the event. It also provides an opportunity to slow down during the busy time of year.

Before entering the school gym, where the event takes place, ladies mingle over a tempting variety of cookies, along with tea and coffee. During the event, guests enjoy a light lunch prepared by the tea committee and men of the parish and served by men and youth. Entertainment includes music, storytelling and an inspirational keynote speaker.

Humble beginnings

Parishioners Linda Stramel and Michelle McCloskey brought the Glory Be Tea to life in 2003, with support from Fran Riley, director of Religious Education at the time.

“Fran shared with me she was on a mission to find new ways to bring people to get to know each other and to spread God’s word to St. James parishioners,” Linda remembers. “She asked me for ideas of how she could accomplish this. I had attended an annual Christmas tea held by a friend’s Baptist church, and while I loved going to the lovely tea and looked forward to it each winter, I wished for a tea that would have a Catholic flavor with my fellow women friends at St. James. When Fran heard the idea, she was immediately enthusiastic. She envisioned it bringing God’s word not only to the ladies who attended, but also to the youth and men who helped.”

Planning continues through the year

About 10-15 people help plan the tea each year. “We start formal meetings near the beginning of the school year to finalize the plan for this year’s tea while beginning to determine the theme for next year,” says Cathy Dodge, who began co-chairing the event with Jo

Glory Be Tea
Dec. 12, 2010, 12:30-3 p.m.
Tickets are \$12 and will go on sale in late October.
Watch the Sunday bulletin for information.

Micek last year. “We usually meet a few times during the year to make the favors and get the ideas rolling.”

A highlight for the planning committee is testing menu items for the next year’s tea. “We usually have one meeting to test the entrée, and one to choose the dessert,” Jo says.

Parish pulls together

It takes a lot of people to put together an event like this, which serves about 200 women. In addition to the planning committee, members of the parish staff, Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts and Youth Group all play critical roles.

“It takes a lot of preparation, but our committee members are dedicated to providing the best tea we can each year,” Cathy says. “We are always so excited about how the tea comes together in the end. We get a great amount of support from the parish staff and several different groups in the parish. It’s awesome to be part of such a wonderful, cooperative parish family!”

If you would like to join the planning committee or would like to contribute cookies for the upcoming Glory Be Tea, contact Jo, (816) 588-5206, or Cathy, (816) 734-8338.



From left: Linda Stramel, Meredith Klamm, Nadine McCoy and Myra Meyer work on favors for the upcoming Glory Be Tea, planned this year for Dec. 12.

Sacrament of baptism gives our children new lives in Christ

by Cecilia Richardson,
Director of Religious Education

THE NEXT SEVERAL issues of *St. James NetWork* will take a look at the seven sacraments in a simple-to-understand, question-and-answer format. In this issue, we begin with baptism.

Q. What is baptism?

A. In a nutshell, the sacrament washes your child's soul clean of Adam and Eve's original sin. He or she now has a new life in Christ.

Q. What is the parents' role in getting a child baptized in our church?

A. There are a few requirements:

1. Parents must attend a short class on the theology of the sacrament.
2. After attending the class, parents may call the parish office to arrange the Mass date and time. Baptism is a community event and occurs during Sunday Mass.
3. Choose Godparents. Two are typical; at least one must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic.
4. Parents are strongly encouraged to register with the parish and get involved in parish life. Being around other practicing Catholic families helps to support parents in their efforts to raise their child Catholic.
5. The role of Catholic parent doesn't end with getting a child baptized. Parents are the most important faith figures in their children's lives. No matter how great the parish's educational opportunities may be, nothing compares to the influence of Mom and Dad. Kids look to Mom and Dad to see how they live out their faith (or don't).

Q. What happens during the parent baptism class?

A. Parents learn about the basics of the sacrament, its signs and symbols, and the mechanics of what we do during the baptism.

The classes are taught on a rotating basis by seven couples who are not only active members of the parish, but also faithful Catholic parents, who can speak knowledgeably about how to take on the challenges ahead. In many cases, young parents may have been away from the church for a while and are unsure how to reconnect. Having slightly older role models who can not only answer questions, but also share experiences, helps support new parents in their role.

Q. What should parents consider in choosing Godparents?

A. The Catholic church requires at least one Godparent to be a confirmed, practicing Catholic. The other Godparent does not have such requirements — and may even be non-Catholic.

The Godparents' primary role is to support the parents — to be good role models and positive forces for good in the home. The ideal Godparent would be someone whom you respect, whose advice you welcome, who lives faith through actions and lifestyle, and who will support you in your efforts.

Raising good Catholic children is not



Andrea and Clint Elliott had their babies, Simon and Jude, baptized at St. James Church in July. Fr. Timothy Armbruster, associate pastor, (center) officiated.

an easy task, and parents need all the help they can get. Godparent is NOT just a symbolic role. They need to be someone who will be present in your child's life.

Being a Godparent is a big responsibility, and one that carries with it the duty to speak up if necessary. Choosing good Godparents requires a great deal of thought and prayer — and the best choice may not be your first pick.

Q. Who should parents contact when they want their child baptized, and when should they do it?

A. Call the parish office, (816) 781-4343, and ask for JoAnn Ollier. Ideally, your first call to the parish should be well before the baby is born. There is a limit to how many couples can attend each parent class session. If it's a particularly busy time, the next available slot may be a month or two away.

St. James NetWork

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We're on the web!
www.stjames-liberty.org



Congratulations to Judy Keisling (far left) and Shawn Doherty (third from left) our parish recipients of the 2010 Bishop's Recognition Award in September. Bishop Robert Finn (second from left) officiated the Mass at the Cathedral in downtown Kansas City. Fr. Tom Albers (far right), St. James pastor, also attended. Judy volunteers for a variety of parish programs, including HOPE, the Capital Campaign, youth Confirmation program, St. James feast day celebration and the upcoming pictorial directory. She also is president of the Over 50s Club. Shawn has volunteered countless hours over the past six years to update and manage the parish's computers.

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