

*Let us contemplate once again  
the wonder of Christmas.*

*Jesus, Word of God and Son of Mary,  
is born in Bethlehem and history is changed forever.  
God has united humanity and divinity  
in an unbreakable bond.  
What happens to us is now permanently  
bound to God's own history.*

*Thank you for your parish involvement  
and generosity and support. It is a privilege to work  
with you in helping SS. John and Paul Parish live out the  
mission and ministry of Jesus. As you celebrate the awesome  
nature of this event and remember it with your families,  
may God plant within you a peace and joy that runs  
deeper than the daily worries and problems of life.*

*Merry Christmas!  
God's blessings on your New Year!*

*Fr. David Buersmeyer, Pastor  
JoAnne Owens, Pastoral Associate  
Linda Bauer, Coordinator Faith Formation  
Paula Klozik, Business Manager  
Al Eppens, Director of Liturgical Music*

*Mary Ann LaRaia, Parish Secretary  
Kathy Mollon, Christian Service Coordinator  
Karen Peters, Assistant Coordinator/Youth Minister  
Bob Lerczak, Maintenance*

## Here's what's Happening this week!

### **Monday, December 26:**

- \*Mass at 7:00 p.m.
- \*NO RE Grades 1-6 at 4:45 p.m.
- \*NO Adult Bells at 7:45 p.m.
- \*Parish Offices Closed

### **Tuesday, December 27:**

- \*Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- \*NO Jr. Choir at 5:00 p.m.
- \*NO Jr. Bells at 5:45 p.m.
- \*NO RE Gr. 1-6 at 4:45 & 6:30 p.m.
- \*Parish Offices Open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Wednesday, December 28:**

- \*Mass at 9:00 a.m.
- \*Parish Offices Open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 29:**

- \*NO Adult choir 7:00 p.m.
- \*Parish Offices Open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Friday, December 30:**

- \*Parish Offices Closed

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### **Holiday Office Hours**

**Closed:**  
(Monday, Dec. 26)

**Reduced Office Hours:**  
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
Tuesday-Thursday, Dec. 27-29

**Closed New Year's Weekend:**  
(Friday-Monday, Dec. 30-Jan. 2)

**Regular office hours resume:**  
Tuesday, January 3

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### **Regular Parish Office Hours**

Mon. - Wed. — 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.  
 Thursday — 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
 Friday — 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
 Saturday—12:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
 Sunday — 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



## **January 1 — Feast of Mary, Mother of God**

**Saturday, December 31, at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, January 1, Masses at**  
**8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.**

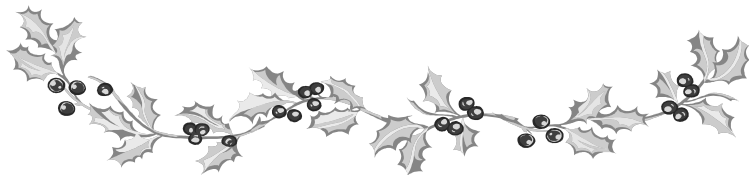
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Tuesday, January 3



## **North Vicariate Newsletter on line**

The monthly North Vicariate Newsletter is now available online at [www.NMVonline.org](http://www.NMVonline.org). The newsletter lists the mass times for every parish in our vicariate. For the current issue and archives of past issues of the newsletter, check out the page entitled "View the North Macomb News".

## **Baptism Preparation**

The next baptism preparation session will be on January 4, 2006. Prior to attending the preparation class, you must call for an appointment to come into the office to register your child.

# P

## astor's Perspective

### \*Christmas as a Season

Although many of us have been celebrating the season for some days/weeks, as a faith community the Christmas season begins with our current weekend celebrations and extends through the Feasts of the Holy Family, Mary Mother of God, Epiphany, all the way to the Baptism of the Lord (January 9<sup>th</sup> this year). Because Christmas is on a Sunday, the season is shortened this year, which is a shame. A shortened season fits into the current cultural mode—driven by the economic engine of selling goods—where we move on to the next season as fast as we can. Let's try to linger in the season for awhile. Keep the tree and lights up. Take time to play some real Christmas carols, whose words are beautiful and meaningful. Find time to contemplate the awesome mystery, as it says on the front, that God has "united humanity and divinity in an unbreakable bond."

### \*Do We Believe Each of Us Has a Vocation?

"Vocation" comes from the Latin word meaning "to call". As baptized followers of Jesus, we believe God calls each of us along a way, a sharing in Jesus' paschal life, death and resurrection. It is a vocation, because not all choose to live that "way". It is a vocation, because God claims us as his people and asks us to live that path in our own journey of life.

Each of us who have been baptized, has been claimed by Christ as a member of his Body, the Church, and called by God to have that baptism make a difference. Everything—and that means everything!—in our lives is able to be part of the mystery of God's grace and reconciliation at work in the world. How we live, what we do, our responsibilities as parents, friends, brothers, sisters, our professions, our personal talents and gifts all are part of that baptismal journey of faith.

But do we believe that? Do we believe that in prayer, in taking time for reflection and discernment, that God is

actively at work through Christ, leading us? Or do we let that idea be limited to priests, women religious, monks and brothers? Our parish vocations committee has asked that the Masses on the weekend of January 15<sup>th</sup> be focused on the fact that each one of us—including priests and religious, but by no means only or even mainly such callings—is called by God. Our vocation is the way we respond to that call or invitation from God.

At the Masses on that weekend in January, the homily will be more dialogue in form. I will be asking a few of you—or even better, I hope a few of you willingly speak up!—to share what difference it makes in your ordinary, daily life, to be a person of Christian faith. Each of us is called. What is that vocation at this stage in your life?

### \*2006

I am amazed at how quickly the years roll by. It seems like we were all preparing for the new millennium just a little while ago. The approach of a new year always fills me with both nostalgia and hope. So much changes in our lives; so many people we lose; so much is different in the world. Thus the nostalgia. Yet, I envy those just coming into their own. What will the rest of this century bring? Many of them will be around to see it all. And stronger than envy, I have hope. I believe the generations coming up will find a way to shape our world in a more united way.

### \*Teaching Next Semester

My teaching schedule for next semester includes a Saturday morning course through Siena Heights (at their Lansing extension campus) on Sacramental Theology. It is one of my favorite courses, because I am able to be both practical (look at how we actually celebrate the sacraments) and theoretical (to understand sacraments one has to look at our understanding of Church, Jesus Christ, God, creation and eschatology and much more). The students always tell me at the end that they were thinking it was just going to be about studying the seven sacraments and the requirements connected to each. Can't let them get away with too easy of a course!

The other course I am teaching is at Orchard Lake, SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, on "Understanding the Writings of Pope John Paul II." His was an amazing life and he was a very creative, complex thinker. Although I do not agree with everything in his philosophical and theological approach, I am enjoying preparing the classes and learning of the various influences in his life and coming to a deeper understanding of his writings.

In addition, I will be doing some adult education for pastoral ministers, including a day on "Spirituality for the Long Haul," "On Being Public Ministers," and "Deepening our Appreciation for Catholic Social Teaching." A night that is for both pastoral ministers and the general public has the focus "The Ethics of Stem Cell Research and the Use of Stem Cells".

I mention all of these because I will bring some of the thoughts of this teaching into the columns over the next few months. Also, you need to know that for me personally such teaching keeps stretching me, gives me energy and vision for what happens in the parish, even though it at times might conflict with one or other parish events.

### \*Scripture Quote:

We know the Christmas story by heart, mostly from the perspective of the gospel of Luke, which we proclaim at especially the midnight Mass. Within it, though, is a wonderful sentence that can serve as a prayer mantra at many moments of life: "*Do not be afraid: for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*"

We are not to be afraid, no matter what life throws at us. The meaning of life, the way to embrace life in its fullest way, the way to salvation has been given. Take that Scripture into your heart.



May God's embrace of humanity in and through Jesus wipe away all fear so that we can respond each day in love.

Fr. Buersmeyer

## 2005-2006 Religious Formation Program

### Early Childhood

(ages 3-4-5 years)

Sunday: 9:30-10:30 a.m.

**No Session: Jan. 1 & 15**

Sessions: Jan. 8, 22, 29

### Grades 1-6

Monday: 4:45-6:00 p.m.

Tuesday: 4:45-6:00 p.m.

& 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Sessions: Jan. 9/10, 23/24, 30/31

**No Sessions: Jan. 2/3, 16/17**

### Grades 7-8

Sunday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**No Sessions: Dec. 25, Jan. 1, 15**

Sessions: Jan. 8, 22, 29

### R.C.I.C. with Families

Sunday: 10:30 a.m.

January 8

## The Greatness of Humanity

Sometimes we expect something extraordinary or miraculous to happen at Christmas. But when Christ came on earth, he came clothed, not in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary. He came dressed in the cloak of our weak, fragile, mortal humanity.



‘They wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.’



Like an acorn that falls to earth, silently and unheralded, in a remote corner of the forest, and which grows into a great oak tree, so from these lowly origins Jesus grew up to show us the greatness of our humanity

## LESSON PLANNING

For ALL Catechists & Assistants

GRS. 1-3: MON., JAN. 16 5:00 p.m.

GRS. 4-6 TUES., JAN. 17 5:00 p.m.

Call Linda Bauer if you cannot attend at 781-9488



## The Joy of Believing

We can imagine that the shepherds saw the Christ Child with their own eyes and touched him with their hands. Faith was easy for them. But was it?

The people who saw Christ probably found it harder to believe. They did not and could not have seen God. What they saw was a human being, just like themselves. Which means they, too, had to make an act of faith.

Yet, if we are to believe in Christ we must see him somehow. What must we do in order to believe? As second hand disciples, it is harder in some ways, but easier in others.

Things are harder because 20 centuries have gone by since Jesus walked the earth. A lot of dust has gathered. The light has dimmed. But on the positive side, that the son of God came down on earth has become a very natural thing and so in some ways has become easier to believe. As disciples, we all have to make the leap of faith.

The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger. They returned to flocks glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. You could say that they came on foot, and went away on wings. That's what faith does. It lightens and sweetens our being in the world.

Joy is an authentic sign of the truth of Christianity. This joy springs first of all from the goodness of God in himself. Then from God's goodness in dealings with us. Life is unbearable without God. When we allow ourselves to get disconnected from God, there is an enormous loss felt. An enormous vacuum occurs.

Happy those who taste the joy of believing, the rapture of faith in God, the ecstasy of heeding the divine invitation and clasping his outstretched hand. At Christmas we are filled with wonder at the nearness of God. Somebody is watching over us. Somebody is watching out for us. If God is with us who can be against us? By our presence here today, we have in a sense, made the journey to Bethlehem. We have heard the message of the angels to the shepherds.

May the Lord help us to make the leap of faith so that we may experience some of the 'great joy' announced to the shepherds. This will give us a new heart as we journey towards the heavenly Bethlehem, where we shall see him face to face, not as an infant, but in his glory.

*Joy to the World!*



## Teen News

### Upcoming Teen Sessions...

**January 8** — 6:30 Teen Session

**January 22** — 6:30 Teen Session

**January 29** — 6:30 Parent/Teen Session. Mandatory meeting for all those who will be attending Rainbow

### Rainbow Banner Making

Please join us for preparing the banner which we will present at Rainbow, 2006. We need your ideas along with your crafty hands. We will meet here at the church on December 28 from 1:00-4:30 p.m. This afternoon should be fun and relaxing, so please join us. Anyone needing a ride, please give Mrs. Peters a call at 586.781.9488.

### Attention Youth Ministry Team

The Parish Council and all Commissions will meet on January 18, 2006. This meeting is for all the Youth Ministry Team. Please join us at 7:00 p.m.

## How to Request Help from SS. John & Paul's Chapter of Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers

If you are an adult who is in need of occasional supportive services such as light housekeeping, meals, transportation, errands, chores, minor home repairs, etc., **please call the parish office and make sure you say you are requesting help from Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers.** You will then be transferred to an extension where you will leave your request. You will be contacted shortly about available help.

If you are calling after office hours, please follow the prompt for Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers and press "6". You may then leave your message specifying what type of help is needed. Again, you will be contacted about available help.

Meeting your needs is important to us so it is crucial that you follow the procedure outlined above when requesting help. Thanks for your assistance!



*Today is born our Savior  
Christ the Lord!*



## Health Notes

During this holiday season, we are reminded not to drink and drive. Although this is important all year long, it needs to be re-stated during the holidays. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is celebrating its 25th year of reminding us how dangerous drinking and driving can be. Started by a mother, who had lost a child to a drunk driver, MADD has grown worldwide by making drunken driving issues real and personal, bringing the stories of countless victims/survivors to the forefront of the nation's consciousness. Since its inception on September 5, 1980, MADD has saved over 300,000 lives and counting. MADD has also supported important reforms in the drinking and driving laws. Thanks to MADD and its partners, the following reforms have taken place:

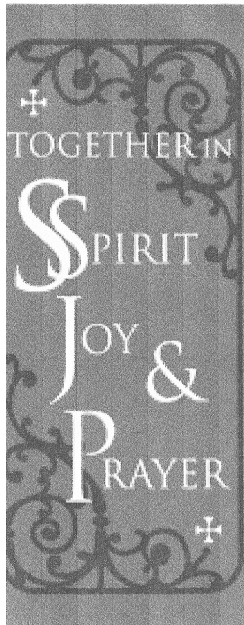
- ◆ The "designated driver" is now a household term
- ◆ Alcohol related traffic fatalities have decreased by 44% since 1980
- ◆ The Federal minimum drinking law was passed 21 years ago, saving more than 19,000 lives
- ◆ The national illegal drunk driving level is .08% blood alcohol concentration enacted in every state this year
- ◆ A simple ribbon has become a tool for safety. One of the most recognized MADD campaigns is "Tie one on for safety" that was initiated in 1986 and continues this holiday season

MADD gives us a holiday checklist to follow for safety:

- ◆ The safest driver is always a sober one. Plan for alternative transportation before drinking begins
- ◆ If hosting a party, provide nonalcoholic drink options for the guests
- ◆ Only time can make someone sober. It takes about an hour for your body to process one standard drink—which is 12 oz. of beer, 5 oz. of wine, or 1 1-1/ oz of 80 proof liquor
- ◆ Seatbelts are the best defense against a drunk driver

Ribbons are available at both entrances to the church. Please take one as a reminder not to drink and drive and have a safe and blessed holiday. Information for this article was taken from [www.madd.com](http://www.madd.com). If you would like to know more about the MADD cause, please visit the website.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Petriches, RN



# SS. John & Paul 25th Anniversary Dinner Celebration

February 12, 2006  
4:00-8:00 p.m.

## Carpathia Club

38000 Utica Road  
Sterling Heights, MI 48312  
(586) 978-2292



**\$27 per person — Cash Bar**  
(Tickets available in the parish office)

Delicious sit-down dinner  
Special 25th anniversary memento  
Live band — Dancing

Former parishioners are invited to join the celebration



**From the Music Desk...****Sing We Now of Christmas**

At Last! After having endured the restrained discipline of the four weeks of Advent, we can finally let our Christmas joy burst forth. The miracle of Christmas manifests itself on multiple levels, from the theological to the psychological, from the ancient to the modern, and from the sacred to the secular. Nowhere is this more apparent than in our love of Christmas Carols.

The word “carol” comes from the Greek word *choros*, meaning “a band of singers and dancers.” Indeed, because the carol is based on dance music, it did not appear until relatively late in Christian history – the fifteenth century. The carol involves the bringing together of several elements, including new forms of music (the ballad in particular), the rebirth of drama and communal singing, and vernacular folk poetry.

Gradually, carols were created which blended sacred themes with secular musical and literary practices. Because of this mixed heritage, several of the older carols alternated between awkward Latin and colloquial English. They were not limited to Christmas; collections exist of carols for Advent (we sang the carol “People Look East” on the First Sunday of Advent), Epiphany, Holy Week and Easter.

As we sing the joy of Christmas, reveling in such carols as “The First Noel,” “Silent Night,” “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen,” and “Angels, We Have Heard on High,” we participate not only in that ancient miracle in Bethlehem, but in the manifestation of that miracle in the lives of hundreds of generations right up to our own time.

**Host Families Needed**

Would you like to host coffee and donuts after one of the Sunday masses? The host family is sent a checklist of how and what needs to be done for hosting. It really is not hard. The parish pays for the donuts and beverage, so there is no cost to you.

We would like to continue coffee and donuts each Sunday, and with your help we will be able to do that. Please consider being a host family and sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway to the Activities Center.

**Online Offertory**

Did you know that SS. John & Paul has some parishioners who support the parish by using online banking? Every week their offertory gets mailed to us by their bank and is treated just as if it were dropped in the Sunday offertory basket since their envelope number is printed on the check.

Electronic Sunday Offerings is another way to consistently support the parish automatically. Electronic Sunday Offerings (ESO) is a pre-authorized payment plan where parish members authorize monthly or bi-monthly deductions to be made from their checking or savings account into the parish’s account.

If either of these opportunities to support the parish appeals to you, you can pick up an ESO form in the literature racks in back of church or set the church up for a weekly automatic donation on your personal computer using online banking. Thank you for considering these new ways to contribute to the parish.

**Tent Cards****A Child Is Born To Us**

We have been waiting for a Wonder Person...a Mighty Counselor, an Everlasting Holy One, a Bringer of Peace, the Messiah...our Savior!

How does he arrive? In a golden chariot, upon the clouds with a blast of trumpets? No! He comes as a baby, born in a cave, the newest member of a homeless family. He sleeps in the straw.

There is something outrageous—preposterous—about the Savior of the Universe, the Messiah of Eternity, the baby of Almighty God, who is Almighty God, being born on the side of a hill, in a makeshift stable, because all the inns in Bethlehem were filled and Mary and Joseph did not have a reservation. Jesus, who was to become our bread and wine, our Eucharist, was laid to sleep on the straw in a manger.

Why might God choose such a poor environment for such a blessing? What are we called upon to learn from this story?



“Senora Dona Maria,  
I come from far away  
and I bring a pair of rabbits  
to the little Child today.

Squash, I bring,  
potatoes, and flour for poor Ana.  
Mamma, Papa send regards;  
so does old Aunt Juana.

In the Creche of Bethlehem  
are sun, moon, stars galore,  
The Virgin and St. Joseph  
and Jesus in the Straw.”

(*Peace on Earth,*  
a traditional poem from Chile)



## Together in Ministry

### Together in Prayer

Let us all celebrate the memory of the birth of Jesus with a prayer that can be said as you gather with family and friends during this Blessed Season.



Together we serve one another...  
 Together we celebrate...  
 Together we pray...

“Come, Lord Jesus,  
 Light of the world,  
 Prince of peace and beloved Savior;  
 come into our hearts this Christmas  
 and fill us with your gifts of love and joy.

Thank you for “gifting” us  
 with your presence among us.

With Mary and Joseph,  
 we rejoice and thank God for you.  
 With the angels and saints we sing,

“Glory to God in the highest.”

With the Magi and the shepherds we bow  
 before you with hearts full of wonder.

Dear Emmanuel, God with us,  
 help us to follow you faithfully  
 and to share the good news of your coming  
 with everyone we meet.”

Amen

### Pray for our sick



Marjorie & Bob Aiken, Mary Angelosante, Mary Burcar, Ralph Cleary, Geraldine Dale, Lorraine Dawe, Lauren DeNio, Juan DiMusto, John Dreffs, Alojzy Filipowicz, Krystyna Green, Ronnie Housewright, Anna Kaltz, Bernice Mayer, Bob Mehlick, Henry Miciek, Deann Miller, Dorothy Puffpaff, Helen Raad, Pasqua Rea, Hank Roman, Albert Sabbe, Camille Smith, Michelle Smith, Barbara Supina, Lou Scarpaci, Karen Shea, David Stinson, Kelli Sobetski, Marianne Vettraino, Toni Willoughby

### Pray for our military



Noel & Greg Ales, Nick Bassett, Augie Biache III, Mike Boback, Jon Brunner, Andrew Eppens, Eric Eppens, Tony Gentilia, Brett Kelsey, David Krzycki, Jonathon Krusinski, Chris Krusinski, Matthew MacLeod, Paul McGowan, David Newberry, Thomas Schmidt, Jennifer Shepard, Vincent Titeriga, Chris Urbanczyk

### Stewardship Report

December 17-18, 2005

Weekly budget..... \$11,600.00  
 Offertory ..... \$11,026.00  
 No. Sunday envelopes used ..... 311  
**Total offertory ..... \$11,026.00**

#### Other Monies / (# Envelopes)

Debt Reduction / (9) ..... \$192.00  
 Children’s Env. / (12) ..... \$11.12  
 Retire. For Rel. / (9)..... \$525.00  
 Year End (1) ..... \$200.00  
 Christmas (8) ..... \$250.00

The shepherds who heard the joyous news from the angels on that first Christmas night and then hurried to find the infant Savior must surely have been changed by that experience. How has His coming changed my life?

### Readings for the Week of December 25, 2005

#### Sunday, December 25:

Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25;  
 Mt 1:1-25 or 1:18-25  
 Midnight: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96; Ti 2:11-14;  
 Lk 2:1-14;  
 Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97; Ti 3:4-7;  
 Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98; Heb 1:1-6;  
 Jn 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

#### Monday, December 26:

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31; Mt 10:17-22

#### Tuesday, December 27:

1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97; Jn 20:1a, 2-8

#### Wednesday, December 28:

1 Jn 1:5—2:2; Ps 124; Mt 2:13-18

#### Thursday, December 29:

1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96; Lk 2:22-35

#### Friday, December 30:

Sir 3:2-7, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3;  
 Ps 128; Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or  
 Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40  
 or 2:22, 39-40

#### Saturday, December 31:

1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96; Jn 1:1-18

#### Sunday, January 1:

Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

### Sponsor of the week

Washington Lions



**Eucharistic  
Prayer Requests**

**Saturday and Sunday  
December 24-25, 2005**

For the deceased relatives and friends  
of parishioners

**Monday, December 26, 2005**

Donald & Oreste Vazquez by Family  
Joan Cischke by R. Edwards Family

**Tuesday, December 27, 2005**

For the parishioners

**Wednesday, December 28, 2005**

Helen Scheff by Dobbs Family  
Dorothy & Frank Murphy by Friends

**Saturday and Sunday  
December 31-Jan. 1, 2006**

Joan Martino by Family

<b>Liturgical appointments for Dec. 31-Jan.1, 2006</b>				
	<b>5:00 p.m.</b>	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>	<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>11:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Celebrant</b>	Fr. Buersmeyer	Fr. Sayes	Fr. Buersmeyer	Fr. Buersmeyer
<b>Lectors</b>	See Sign-Up Sheet			
<b>Eucharistic Ministers</b>				
<b>*Captain</b>	See Sign-Up Sheet			
<b>Altar Servers</b>	M. Campbell J. Bucan	—	R. Dickens M. Rowley	M. Wolicki S. Catalano C. Baes N. Bytner
<b>Greeters</b>	See Sign-Up Sheet			
<b>Cantors</b>	—	—	—	—
<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Team #1</b> B. Diebboll L. Foltran R. Pewinski J. Wright	<b>Team #3</b> B. Dale J. Cymbalski E. Fannon S. Krajewski A. Sova	<b>Team #5</b> L. Monfils M. Bayer B. Janowiak K. Partyka A. Saylor E. Saylor	<b>Team #7</b> B. Cauley J. Gerds R. Kopera L. LePage J. Martino B. Jiannuzzi
<b>Money Counters</b>	Catherine LaRose, Ken Grunewald, Moira Mullin, Bill & Bev Huellmantel, Hilary & Grace Susalla			