



THE VOICE

A Praying, Teaching, Caring, Serving Sign of God's Presence

Advent 2011



“We Wait in Joyful Hope”

The first Sunday of Advent falls on November 27 this year. Our theme this year is “We wait in joyful hope.” Advent is a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the nativity of Christ. Advent also marks the beginning of the Church’s liturgical year. *Adventus* is a Latin word for “coming” and is the exact Latin equivalent for the Greek word “*parousia*,” commonly used when referring to the Second Coming. So the season of Advent serves as a dual reminder of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of the Messiah, as well as the waiting that we as Christians observe now as we look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

During the Communion Rite of Mass, we pray “. . . *we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.*” That very phrase is what we observe during Advent. This holy season of Advent is a time to examine our relationship with He who came and is to come again, as we patiently await his arrival. So it truly is a season of Joyful Hope!

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Longest Night Prayer Service

Christmas is normally a time of joy for Christians, but for some it can also be a time of sadness. The loss of a loved one, the anguish of a broken relationship, the insecurity of unemployment, the weariness of ill health, or the deployment of a family member are realities of life that can be made more painful by the celebrations going on around us.

It is during such times that we need to take the time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. The Longest Night prayer service is intended to help us focus on the fact that we are not alone. You are invited to join us for this special prayer service on Wednesday, **December 21 at 7:00 p.m.** Come join in sharing prayers, hearing Scripture and music that acknowledges that God is present to those who mourn, to those who struggle. Because the winter solstice occurs the next day (the day of the year with shortest daylight and longest night-time), this special prayer service will remind us that God comes to shine in our deepest darkness.

The service will be followed by light refreshments and fellowship in the Witzman Center, or if you prefer, you may remain in church for private prayer. Please invite others to come with you as your support, or if you know others, who find that Christmas is a painful season, please let them know that they are most welcome. For more information, contact **Cathy Magness at 253-5171 ext. 112** or cmagness@ascensionkettering.org.

Little Blue Books

Our “Little Blue Books” will be available starting the weekend of November 19-20 at the church doors. We invite you to take one and use them for 6 minutes a day in your prayerful journey through the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

November – December Mass / Event Schedule

- November 19/20** – Giving Tree begins
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
- November 24** – Thanksgiving Day Mass at 9:00 AM
(St. Vincent food collection) *This is **not** a holy day of obligation.*
- December 4** – Coffee/Donut Sunday
Fair Trade Coffee/Chocolate/Tea sales
Scrip card sales
Martha & Mary event at 2 PM
- December 8** – Feast of Immaculate Conception Mass at 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM and 7:00 PM
*This **is** a holy day of obligation*
- December 10/11** – All Giving Tree packages are due
- December 15** – Reconciliation Service at Immaculate Conception at 7 PM
(for Ascension, Immaculate and St. Helen parishes)
- December 16/17** – Food Pantry Christmas Basket distribution
- December 21** – Longest Night Prayer Service at 7 PM
- December 24** – Christmas Eve Masses
3:00 PM Mass (with closed circuit TV in Witzman Center)
5:00 PM Mass (with closed circuit TV in Witzman Center)
10:00 PM Mass (lessons and carols begin at 9:30 PM)
(Note: There is no Mass at midnight at Ascension.)
- December 25** – Christmas Day
9:00 AM Mass
11:00 AM Mass
- December 31** – New Year's Eve
5:00 PM Mass
- January 1** – Nativity of the Lord
8:30 AM Mass
10:30 AM Mass
12:15 PM Mass





Giving Tree 2011

Submitted by Ann McManus

Ascension Parish will continue our tradition of outreach through the Giving Tree project. We have received the names of 80 needy families/households through Catholic Social Services. For each child whose names we receive there will be two ornaments (one for clothing, one for a toy) on the tree – each ornament has the gender, age and size of the individual and a gift suggestion given by the parent. There is also one tag per adult in the household.

Catholic Social Services makes the following recommendations:

. Gifts should be between \$10.00 and \$35.00. Gifts should not exceed \$35.00. If a request costs more we ask you to decide on something within the recommended cost range or give a gift card.

. Gift suggestions are provided on the ornaments. However, substitutions for more appropriate items are allowed. Correct sizing is important, returns and exchanges are not encouraged.

. Please, NO guns.

Past experience with clothing and sizing suggests that **gift receipts are helpful**; please include them inside the package with the clothing when possible.

In addition there will be gift tags for Elizabeth's New Life Center and Ascension's own Elizabeth Ministry program. As both of these programs use the gifts throughout the following year we suggest that these gifts not be wrapped but simply placed in a gift bag or under the tree with the gift tag attached.

Also, maintaining awareness of the needs of

local families we will include envelopes on the Giving Trees for gift certificates for food. If you take one of these envelopes we encourage you to enclose a check payable to Ascension or gift certificate/card purchased through our Women's Guild Scrip program. You may then place the envelope in the Sunday collection basket.

Giving Trees will be placed in the narthex and baptistery on the weekend of November 19-20. Return all gifts (wrapped and unwrapped) with the ornament securely fastened to the gift, back under one of the Giving Trees, preferably on the weekends of December 3rd or December 10th. **ALL GIFTS MUST BE RETURNED BY THE NOON MASS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11TH.** Gifts are bagged, closed and labeled on that Sunday and delivered first thing Monday morning. Bows frequently come off and are NOT RECOMMENDED. Please do not attach ornaments to bows or ribbons, rather **securely tape** them to the package.

If you know of someone in our parish area who could use assistance for their family this Christmas, please call **Cathy Magness** in the parish office at **253-5171 ext. 112**. We make every effort to respect the dignity and privacy of those we help. For more information about the Giving Tree project, ornament information or other questions please contact **Ann McManus** at **643-4064**.

Your help with the Giving Tree Project does make a difference. Last year we received this note from a parishioner:

"Fr. Chris and staff: We wish to offer our heartfelt thank you to you for our Christmas to our grandchildren. Without the gifts and clothing that you provided, we had only a very small gift for each one (and there are five of them). Each child received a neat, cool, age-appropriate and current (very important!) toy/game and an outfit that was sized right and fashionable. We were stunned! It was as if someone knew our grandkids.

Additionally the merchandise gift cards allowed us to make a great Christmas dinner and have some stocking stuffers.

I have been laid off over one year. My husband took a pay cut two years ago. Our son got laid off and moved back home with his son, now almost 2. Money is tight, so thank you again!"

Thank you for your generous participation in this Ascension outreach project.



United In Faith

Submitted by Jean Nickelman

On Tuesday, September 27th, the Queenship of Mary prayer service opened as everyone processed into the church with flowers to place around the statue of Mary and the picture of Our Lady of the Light. John Saurine presided and shared his reflections concerning the significance of Mary's Queenship. Luz Hayes read the Spanish translation of the scripture passage from Isaiah. Knights Paul Larochelle and Tom Rafferty read the petitions. Girl Scouts Sonja Kosir, Sophia Murray, and Maria Schlegel led the prayer of the litany. Pianist, Maria Bete, led the music accompanied by beautiful singing from Jessica, Maria, and Tiffany Perez & Anna Schlegel. Sylvia Whitford crowned the statue of Mary, accompanied by her husband, Tim, and children, Nathan, Marisa and Bethany. This annual prayer service is held in union with the feast day celebration of Nuestra Senora de la Luz (NSL) in Lima, Peru.

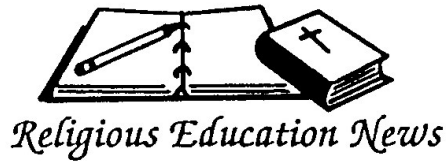
Eleven parishioners at NSL have completed the first course in an "on-line" University of Dayton series of classes for catechists. Father Chris wrote to Padre Maximo saying that we "want to support all of the good work that you are doing.... we are providing tuition for courses that your catechists can take on-line to help them learn to teach our faith." Thanks also goes to Johnson Romero at U.D. who has helped them take this step by introducing this idea and guiding the people at NSL through the process.

Norma Colussi went to Peru this summer and presented a check from Ascension during the close of a Sunday Mass at Nuestra Senora de la Luz. This donation is being used to purchase books for the parish library in memory of the former librarian, Amelia Diaz Aliaga, who died tragically in February. She was a highly dedicated member of the parish, especially in her work with the library. After Mass,

Norma and many of the parishioners went to the library where some books were on display as a representation of how the money will be used. Two of Amelia's sisters were present for this event and were grateful to the point of tears. The library is well used but has had a very low inventory of books. The money for this donation included the \$651 of proceeds from the 2011 Fiesta Latina and the matching amount given by the Knights of Columbus of Ascension (Our Lady of the Light Council).

Norma has been a true ambassador of faith between Ascension and Nuestra Senora de la Luz. Her love for the people and their strong faith and traditions continuously pull her back to Peru. She keeps our ties with NSL strong. Bill Bell maintains his personal contact with NSL and is happy to report that NSL will actually be **raising the roof** to cover the church very soon. We look forward to seeing pictures from that event. Once again, Norma plans to spend 3 weeks of the Christmas season in Peru. She will return with stories and pictures to share with the people of Ascension. Maybe some of those will include the roof for the church.





Students are keeping busy with a variety of activities - Our Early Childhood “saints” entertained their grandparents and senior members of the parish at the All Saints party on October 30th. Soon they will begin preparing for their Advent celebration.

Students in Grades 1-8 observed **MISSION SUNDAY** with visits from each of the Outreach Ministries here at Ascension. It is part of our continuing Mission program we have implemented called Helping Others. Each grade has been assigned a different ministry which they will learn about and support. A representative from that ministry came to the classroom and talked to the class about how they can be supportive throughout the year, while our 7th graders went on a field trip to Elizabeth’s New Life Center to see their ministry in action. It is our hope that in this way our students will have a better understanding of each of the outreach ministries we do here at Ascension as they move up through the grades.

Sixth grade students were presented with personal copies of the Catholic Youth Bible to use in their studies. They also received Bible covers thanks to the generous contribution of parishioner Arlene Keller. Thanks Arlene for your continued support of our young people!

Thanksgiving Mass for Grades 1-5 will take place on November 22. During the Mass a representative from each class will sign the School Pledge of Nonviolence as part of our Growing Peace process. Grade 8 students will plan and lead the Middle School Thanksgiving prayer services. Many families have chosen to take the Family Pledge of Nonviolence; their names are inscribed on doves posted around the Peace Board on the wall outside the Religious Education Office. Congratulations to the Peacemakers of the Month for October, Andrew Hosford and Paige Brown

Parents of students preparing for First Reconciliation met in October to hear Father Chris speak about the sacrament and to receive the materials they will use to prepare their children at home. Again

this year we will celebrate a communal penance service with both school and Religious Education students combined. Parents will also have the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament with their child.

Seventh grade Confirmation students participated in a Spirit Day retreat in October. Eighth grade Confirmation students participated in their Retreat in November and will be ritually welcomed to the preparation process during the 8:30 Mass on November 20.

The students will soon be observing Advent with prayer services and other activities. Our volunteer catechists work very hard to uphold the spiritual dimension of Advent and Christmastime.



Crèches on Display

Submitted by Jean Nickelman

Crèches from the U.D. collection will be exhibited here at the Church of the Ascension. This display is sponsored by the Twinning Committee and comes to the parish through the courtesy of The Marian Library of the International Marian Research Library at the University of Dayton. A variety of Nativity scenes will be in the two cases outside of the Witzman Center. The Twinning Committee's case will feature crèches from Peru. The second case will contain a variety of styles and sizes of crèches.

An Open House for everyone in the family will take place at the Roesch Library on the campus at U.D. the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 26th, from 1 to 5 p.m. It opens the season of exhibits throughout the Miami Valley with crèches on display, music, light refreshments, special activities for the children, Christmas items for sale, and a "college football viewing area." Creches from the U.D. collection can be viewed from the end of November through the first week of January at the U.D.'s Roesch Library, the Marian Library (on the 7th floor of the Roesch Library) and the Mt. St. John Gallery on Shakertown Road.



Keep Christ in Christmas

Submitted by Tom Rafferty

This year we will once again be displaying our "Keep Christ in Christmas" banner on the corner of Woodman and Forrer Blvd. Thank you to the Ascension Knights of Columbus Council for sponsoring and parishioner Matt Miller of Carl's Body Shop and Sign Co. for making and donating this beautiful 4'x8' sign that will be displayed annually.



Who are the Knights?

Submitted by Matthew Boyd

The Knights of Columbus - Our Lady of the Light Council #14891 started at Ascension in November 2009. We are dedicated to our faith and to our church. From the start, we have worked hard to help our church, ministries and the local community.

Ascension is our parish; the parish we belong to and the place where we meet. This Christmas we will set up a Nativity display in front of our church. Our council purchased the Nativity for Ascension. Council members help our parish in many ways.

Coffee and donut Sundays have been a great function at our church and the Knights of Columbus are currently organizing and supporting this benefit for Ascension. During coffee and donuts a container is set out to collect "Pennies for Heaven". All of the funds collected go to support religious vocations. We have partnered with the Twinning committee and help them raise funds for their ministry. We also donate to local charities with money raised through our KofC fundraises. Our council recently participated in the rosary rally at the University of Dayton, an event ran by fourth degree Knights.

The Knights are a self run and sustained organization. Our meetings are held at the church once a month. Members are not required to attend all of the meetings. The church is always in need of our help.

Knights are not only for our members but for our families as well. Families are important. Family functions, support of life and strengthening marriage are continuing areas of focus.

We want you to be a part of the Knights. Come help us make a better community and support our church. To find out more visit our website www.ascensionkettering.org/parish-organizations/knights-of-columbus-council-14891. We will also have a table setup at coffee and donuts on the second Sunday of the month.



Youth Kidnap Pastor, Raise Ransom

He never saw it coming. While greeting parishioners in the Narthex after the 5:00 Mass on October 29, Fr. Chris was ambushed, accosted and abducted by a group of over 20 teenage thugs. Armed with a deadly mix of Nerf guns, clothesline, and toilet paper, and disguised with an assortment of oddball costumes, the gang bound our beloved pastor and led him off into the parish office building. Once there, the young punks forced him to beg for mercy and then began calling parishioners, demanding ransom to secure his release.

Parish officials have reported that over \$900 was raised and that Fr. Chris was freed without suffering any serious physical injury. Sources have said, however, that the emotional scars are what concern them. According to Sue Graham, Director of Religious Education, the young people forced him to wear a hat made to look like flower petals. "Oh, the humanity!" she said. "You just have to wonder how he will deal with the trauma of being subjected to such harsh treatment." Joe Ollier, Coordinator of Youth Ministry, is also torn up about the whole incident. "You know, it's one thing to preach about being meek and humble, but it's another thing to put those Beatitudes into practice. If you look at the video, it seems like he doesn't even put up a fight. What courage. I would have totally freaked out under those conditions."

Although the entire incident was witnessed by dozens of church-goers and even video-taped, the crooks escaped unscathed. The whole incident can be viewed on the parish website. As of this time no

arrests have been made and authorities are not commenting about possible leads. The video evidence does seem to suggest however, that the perpetrators will be using their ill-gotten gains to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indianapolis later this month. Funds are also reportedly being diverted to a scholarship fund for the upcoming Winter Retreat and a mission trip this summer. A parent of a parish teenager, who asked to remain anonymous, lamented, "I just can't believe it. I just don't know what's happened to the youth of this parish. It's those darned HomeLIFE groups that are to blame, I bet. If I find out that my child was involved in this, he's toast."

One thing to remember about the whole thing is that despite the horrors of October 29, we still have much to be thankful for. For one, we have a pastor who is such a good sport, and two, we are blessed with so many parishioners who are so very generous with their support of Youth Ministry. The financial support is awesome, said Ollier, but what's even better is knowing that all those folks and more give so much of their time to our young people – coaching, teaching, and encouraging. And then there are those who keep our young people in prayer constantly. Ascension parish is truly blessed. With nurturing support like that, says Ollier, we can turn these kids away from violent crimes like pastor-napping and back to God.





Online Giving Now Available

Church of the Ascension now offers Online Giving! Visit the parish website at

www.ascensionkettering.org to

sign up for Online Giving and begin donating to the Parish, St. Vincent DePaul or Education Ascension automatically. Utilize the internet for the good of the parish through this secure and convenient process. Track parish giving along with your other finances by signing up today. Online giving can be effectively used on its own or in cooperation with regular offering envelopes. If you have any questions, or would like any help in setting up Online Giving, contact **Christy Shanklin** at the parish office at cshanklin@ascensionkettering.org or call **937-253-5171 x109**.

Area Reconciliation Services for Advent 2011

Our Advent reconciliation service will be held in conjunction with Immaculate Conception and St. Helen parishes on **Thursday, December 15 at 7 PM** at Immaculate Conception church. Other area services are:

St. Charles Dec. 5 at 7 PM*

St. Albert Dec. 12 at 7 PM*

St. Luke Dec. 13 at 7PM

(*combination of Incarnation, St. Charles, St. Albert and St. Francis parishes)

Submitting Articles for the VOICE

If you would like an announcement or article in the VOICE please contact **Lauren Boyd** at Lmboyd26@yahoo.com



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
2025 WOODMAN DRIVE
KETTERING, OHIO 45420
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED