

# Our Parish Visitor

## *Our Lady of the Visitation Parish Newsletter*

### Christmas Mass Schedule

**Christmas Vigil**  
**Wednesday, 24 December**  
 \*4:00 p.m. – Church  
 \*Passes Needed  
 7:00 p.m. – Church  
 11:00 p.m. – Church  
 Midnight Mass/Special Music

**Christmas Day**  
**Thursday, 25 December**  
 9:00 a.m. – Church  
 11:00 a.m. – Church  
 Family Liturgy



**Christmas Pageant**  
**Sunday, 21 December 2014**  
 6:00 p.m., Church

Come celebrate the spirit of Christmas and the real reason for the season – Jesus – by attending OLVP's Annual Christmas Pageant, "Sing with Us a Christmas Story". This musical program will present the Christmas story from the gospel of St. Luke and will include some of our most well-known and beloved Christmas hymns. You can sing along!

Come see the beauty of our children dressed as members of the Holy Family, angels, and others from the Nativity story. Adults will also participate and many of our youth will help behind the scenes.

The program is sponsored by our Faith Formation program and we hope to see you there! All are welcome. – Mrs. Olewack

### Advent Wreath and Prayers

The Advent wreath, composed of a circle of evergreens and four candles, has a long tradition in the Catholic Church. The circle represents the eternity of God. Each week a new candle is lit while a special prayer is offered. The progressive lighting of the candles is preparing for the birth of Christ, who is the light of salvation to the world. There are three purple candles, representing prayer, penance, sacrifice and good deeds, and one rose candle lit on the third Sunday of Advent known as Gaudete Sunday, the joyful midpoint of Advent. The color of each candle matches the vestment color worn by the priest on that Sunday of Advent. During the first week of Advent, one purple candle is lit and a prayer for peace is offered. For the second week of Advent, two purple candles are lit and a prayer of hope is said. The third week of Advent, two purple candles and the rose candle are lit and a prayer of joy is recited. At the beginning of the fourth week of Advent, all four candles are lit while saying a prayer of love.



### Legend of the Candy Cane

The candy cane is a colorful treat enjoyed by many at Christmastime. However, many also believe it began as a symbol of Christian faith during a time when Christians could not openly practice their faith. The legend holds that the candy cane was made in the shape of a shepherd's staff and, when held upside down, forms the letter J for Jesus. It is made of hard candy to remind children that Jesus was our "rock", dependable and strong. The red stripes represent the crucifixion and the blood Jesus shed for our sins. The white stripes represent the holiness and purity of Jesus who was sinless. Flavored with peppermint, the candy cane fragrance reminds us of the spices brought by the wise men when they came to visit Jesus. When the candy is eaten, it is often broken into pieces meant to remind us of when Jesus was crucified and his body was broken. The candy cane was made to be given as a gift, representing the love of Jesus when he gave us the gift of salvation.



### Christmas Tree Sale

**Fri, 05 December to  
 Mon, 15 December**

**Weekends:  
 8:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

**Weekdays:  
 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**

*Special Guest*  
**Sunday, 06 December**  
 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
*Bring your camera and capture  
 a memory!*

The Christmas Tree Sale is a time to celebrate the Christmas Spirit and help a family find that special tree. We have Frasers and Douglas Firs cut after Thanksgiving to ensure freshness.

### Volunteer to sell trees!

Help is needed both during the week and on the weekends. No Experience Necessary.

### Volunteer to bring a dish!

OLVP has some great cooks who bring in dishes to keep volunteers warm and energetic. Please volunteer to share your favorite recipe.



**To volunteer, sign up after mass at  
 church or contact:  
 Bill Connors  
 (301) 869-8203**



## Thank you to Ann Dodelin Pastoral Council

With much gratitude and appreciation, the parish would like to thank Ann Dodelin for her many years of service as Chair of the Our Lady of the Visitation Parish Pastoral Council. Ann graciously accepted this leadership role on the Council beginning with her initial appointment in 2006 until this fall.

During Ann's tenure, she provided insightful and effective leadership to the many council members and committees that represented parish activities. These included Social Concerns, Faith Formation, Parish Life (Sodality, Holy Name Society, St. Monica Society, Mary of Nazareth Liaison), and Sacramental Life.

She also provided guidance on the planning for special events such as the celebration of the parish's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on May 31, 2011 and Fr. Ray's and Fr. Mathew's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of Ordination to the Priesthood, both celebrated in 2012. Ann has also served the parish as a Liturgical Minister and has been a steadfast supporter and participant in many parish programs.

Ann's quiet but caring leadership and gentle guidance were an asset to all Pastoral Council discussions and planning. On behalf of the Pastoral Council members, Visitation Parish parishioners, the parish staff and others who have benefited from her leadership and kindness, the parish says: "Thank you, Ann".

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Look for more information in our weekly Parish Bulletin or on the Parish website:  
[www.olvp.org](http://www.olvp.org)

## Adopting Families

Our Lady of the Visitation Parish has had a Social Concerns Ministry for assisting needy families that started back in the days when mass was held at Rachel Carson Elementary School and Fairhaven Methodist Church.

Our first family was identified to us through the Head Start Program here in Montgomery County. They had eleven children, that included three sets of twins. By hard work and determination, they were eventually able to relocate to a home they purchased in West Virginia. They were thankful for our many years of assistance and planned to join a Church in their new location as a result of our influence.

The second family was headed by a single mother with five children. She worked as a child care worker and needed our help because her salary would not cover all the basic needs of her youngsters. We also provided for them for a number of years and watched the children grow and mature. They were the same age as some of the children of our parishioners who were program coordinators for this project.

There have been several different individuals who have managed this social ministry since its inception. Currently, we work with Linkages to Learning to screen and complete a needs assessment of the families we assist. The Site Coordinator is extremely appreciative of the work we do to purchase new items (clothes, winter wear, housewares, bedding, cleaning products & school supplies) that support the extremely impoverished population that is rapidly growing in our area.

We have moved to an on-line sign up program. It has reduced the time it takes for our volunteers to manage the donations. We complete three collections each school year for the same families, which were identified to us in August.

If you would like to get involved with any of our three Adopted Family Collections, please send your current email address to [olvp-socialconcerns@gmail.com](mailto:olvp-socialconcerns@gmail.com) and you will receive the link which will allow you to view the collection information.

Thank you very much for supporting this valuable ministry. The generosity of Our Lady of the Visitation parishioners is an inspiring example of 'love in action' that aids those less fortunate in our community.

- Marianne Beattie, Chair, Social Concerns Committee



## Volunteer Opportunities For Confirmands and Parishioners

Confirmands and their families are encouraged to volunteer for the following parish activities:

Head Start Food Bag Distribution  
Sat, 06 Dec 2014 – 5:00 p.m. mass  
Sun, 07 Dec 2014 – 9:00 a.m. mass  
Sun, 07 Dec 2014 – 11:00 a.m. mass

The Lord's Table Soup Kitchen  
St. Martin's Parish, Gaithersburg, MD  
Thu, 29 January 2015  
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Cardinal's Appeal Collection  
Sat, 07 Feb 2015 – 5:00 p.m. mass  
Sun, 08 Feb 2015 – 9:00 a.m. mass  
Sun, 08 Feb 2015 – 11:00 a.m. mass

Family Pre-Lent Bingo  
Sun, 08, 2015 – 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

To volunteer, contact Kathleen Rooney in the parish office at (301) 948-5536 x108 or email [krooney@olvp.org](mailto:krooney@olvp.org).

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Blessing of the Animals

For the second year, Fr. Ray hosted a blessing of the animals at OLVP in honor of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This year, the blessing was held on the saint's Feast Day, 4 October.

The morning dawned cool, clear and crisp and saw the arrival of many wonderful animals. Both parishioners and non-parishioners brought their pets for this special blessing. One woman stopped when she saw the banner announcing the blessing and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity.

There were dogs both large and small, kittens, large turtles and other reptiles and some very cute baby chickens. Plans are being made to bless the animals again next year.





## Religious Book/Item Sale

Visitation Parish will be hosting a sale of religious items to celebrate Advent and Christmas. There will also be a selection of gifts for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, First Eucharist, and Marriage. There will be items for both children and adults.

Grandparents, Godparents, aunts/uncles and children can select spiritual gifts for their loved ones that will enhance their faith. Gifts available for sale will include books and music CDs, and DVDs, for all ages, as well as Advent Calendars and candles.

Give the true gift of Christmas this season. Items will be available for sale before and after mass the weekends of 22-23 and 29-30 November; before and after family bingo on Sunday afternoon, 23 November; and before and after Faith Formation on Sunday evening, 23 November.



## Respect Life Baby Collection

Our parish baby item collection will be held the weekends of 17-18 and 24-25 January 2015. These are the weekends before and after the annual March for Life which will be held on 22 January.

Please bring diapers of all sizes, baby wipes, formula, baby food and clothing for newborn infants through 18 month old toddlers and leave them in the alcove downstairs in the church.

All Items donated will be distributed to the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center and Birthright of Montgomery County. Both organizations were founded by OLVP parishioners and are very appreciative of the incredible generosity parishioners continue to show in giving so many items to this collection each year.

Parents are encouraged to involve their children in making the purchases for the baby collection to help highlight and show support for those mothers who choose life for their children.

## GIVE LE\$\$ TO THE IR\$ REPAIRS NEEDED

Many repairs are needed in our parish facilities. If you would like to make a special, tax deductible contribution toward these needed repairs before the end of the tax year, it would be a great blessing to the church.

There are three ways you can lessen your taxes by giving to Our Lady of the Visitation Parish before the end of the year:

1. **Special Christmas Gift**
2. **Donation of Stock to OLVP**
3. **Remembering OLVP in Wills and Bequests**

All donations to the parish made during 2014 are tax deductible in that year. Stock donations are credited to the donor at full face value on the date of transfer.

Donations and/or questions can be directed to Fr. Ray at [rfecteau@olvp.org](mailto:rfecteau@olvp.org) or the parish's bookkeeper, Kora Perrin, at 301-948-5536 x102.

## Parish School Celebrates 20 Years

On Friday, 14 November 2014, our parish school, Mary of Nazareth Roman Catholic Elementary School, celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. OLVP is one of seven upcounty parishes affiliated with the School.

Fr. Ray presided at a special mass in the new Mary's Chapel which was recently blessed by Bishop Knestout. At the conclusion of the mass, Michael Friel, Principal, presented Fr. Ray with a plaque acknowledging his 20 years of faithful service as a founding pastor and, at one time, Chair of the School's Board of Directors.

Mary of Nazareth School opened its door in September 1994 in what is now our parish Barn building. Grades kindergarten through three were taught in the Barn for the first year and several grades for the second year. In 1996, the school opened in its new building on the property adjacent to OLVP and the Barn became OLVP's parish office.

To provide a sheltered and safe place for the children to play during recess, OLVP built the Pavilion next to the Barn. Once the Barn facility transferred to the parish, the Pavilion was used for many years to celebrate our annual parish picnic and parish anniversary.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### November

- 22-23 Religious book/item sale
- 29-30 Religious book/item sale
- 30 Sun First Sunday of Advent

### December

- 08 Mon *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*, Sacred Liturgy, 12:00 Noon, 7:00 p.m., Church Patronal Feast of the USA
- 21 Sun Christmas Pageant, 6:00 p.m.
- 24 Wed Christmas Eve  
Parish Office Closed at noon
- 25 Thu Christmas Day  
Parish Office Closed
- 31 Wed New Year's Eve  
Parish Office Closed at noon

### January

- 01 Thu *Feast of Mary Mother of God* Sacred Liturgy, 12:00 noon  
Parish Office Closed
- 04 Sun *Epiphany of the Lord*

### February

- 06 Fri Volunteer Appreciation Party, 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m., Founders Hall
- 08 Sun Family Bingo, Founders Hall 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.



## Volunteer Appreciation Party

Anyone who has volunteered in any capacity within the parish over the past year is invited to the Volunteer Appreciation Party on Friday, 06 February 2015, 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. in Founders Hall.

The Volunteer Party is a fun event with delicious food, beverages (including wine and beer), great music and the perfect opportunity to visit with other parishioners. Watch the bulletin for details on how to register to attend.

## Family Pre-Lent Bingo

Come enjoy family bingo with your fellow parishioners on Sunday, 08 February from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Founders Hall.

2013-2014 Budget Report to Parishioners