



The Parish Press

Newsletter of Saint Raphael Parish Family

Milford, Connecticut

November 2020



Parish Mass of Remembrance

The Saint Raphael Community of Faith invites parishioners, families and friends to



a
Mass of Remembrance
to remember and to celebrate all the
members of our parish family who
have died during the past year.

Please join us at Saint Ann Church on
Sunday, November 8, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Christmas Giving Program

No trees, no vines, no gift tags on
window sills or tables - not this year - but
we will have a Christmas Giving Program
in 2020!



With Advent around the corner, our
program coordinators have begun to
brainstorm: *We know there is a need in
the community. How can we structure a
program to meet that need and keep everyone safe
during this uncertain year?* They hope to learn
more by reaching out to the recipient organization
to determine their needs.

Be sure to watch your mail and check your email,
the weekly bulletin and December's *Parish Press*
to learn more about opportunities to help those in
need for Christmas this year.

Parish Press Info for December Due November 9

The Thanksgiving holiday means an early
deadline for December's newsletter. Please submit
your news and notes, suggestions, comments and
photos by Monday, November 9. Send them to
parishpress06460@gmail.com or call Ann Eden
(203-874-8744). Thanks very much. Our staff is
always happy to hear from you.

Feast of Christ the King, Last Sunday of the Liturgical Year Advent Begins November 29

As November draws to a close so does the Liturgical Year. Sunday, November 22 is the Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Advent begins the following Sunday, November 29. During this first season of the Liturgical Year the Church unfolds the mystery of Christ's Incarnation. We prepare for the coming of the Lord - his birth in Bethlehem, his coming to us in Holy Communion, and his second coming at the end of time.

Miracles Abound - An Advent Companion

During Advent we journey toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of Christ in our lives. The booklet *Miracles Abound* by Janet Schaeffler, OP, with its daily prayers and reflections, is an excellent companion and a gift for you from the parish. Look for it at the main church entrances.

Sister Janet's introductory reflection on a line from *O Holy Night* sets the tone. "He appeared and the soul felt its worth." God became one of us through the Incarnation. We can know for certain that we are beloved. We are cherished. We are worth it. Enjoy the booklet. Enjoy your Advent journey.



Thanksgiving Day Mass

Thursday, November 26, 9:00 a.m.
Saint Gabriel Church

You are invited to gather with other
members of the Saint Raphael Faith
Community for Thanksgiving Day Mass,
our celebration of the Eucharist.

The Pilgrims of 1621 who came together to give thanks had endured a harsh and devastating year. We, too, the pilgrim people of God, have known trials and suffering during this difficult year. And, like the colonists, we come before the Lord to give thanks for his everlasting mercy and love. Happy Thanksgiving from the entire staff of *The Parish Press*.

Testing "Pizza Dinners To Go" Format at Beth-El

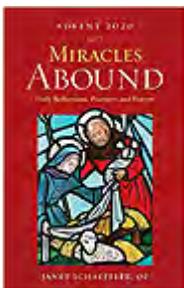
As of October 28 Saint Raphael is back on the evening dinner schedule at Beth-El Center, providing meals for the Center's residents and the community under a new format.

We will no longer offer pizza and conversation in the Center's dining room. Instead, we'll be wrapping and packing our pizza, sides, desserts and beverages as "to go" meals, passing them to recipients through the Center's back door. All recipients will be safely distanced, wearing face coverings.

During the summer Beth-El's staff met via Zoom with community group leaders to provide health and safety guidelines and to introduce the "new normal" meals-to-go format. The change allows Beth-El to maintain its vision of creating a community "where all are fed," a challenge during the COVID-19 crisis.

Saint Raphael's has embarked on a "pilot program" of one dinner per month through December. Dinner teams for 2021 will consist of 3 or 4 volunteers per evening as a way to meet distancing requirements. Heartfelt thanks, as always, to the Knights of Columbus Tinto Council 47, which continues to cover the cost of the pizzas.

For additional "pizza to go" information or to volunteer for the dinner team, please contact Maria (as on page 3). Thank you.





A lot has happened since July 4 when weekend Masses resumed. We were initially limited to 100 participants in each church building. Starting October 8 that number increased to 200. Since public attendance has been allowed we have had a high of 91 participants at one Mass while the total weekend Mass attendance has gone from 174 to 301. Meanwhile, we continue to be significantly below pre-pandemic regular attendance numbers. No one knows what the future holds, but I suspect it will a long while until restrictions are lifted completely.

While we continue to muddle through these difficult times, we cannot afford to let ourselves become lackadaisical and reduce our adherence to the safety protocols that are still necessary. Please, always continue to wear a mask in church and be sure the mask covers your mouth *and* nose. Please practice what we have come to know as “social distancing,” remaining six feet apart from others who do not live in your own household.

One thing we have not been too good at is our procedure for the reception of Holy Communion. We ask that you process to receive in a single file line down the center aisle of the church and maintain spacing according to the markings on the floor. Once you reach the head of the aisle proceed to either of the ministers on the left or on the right.

I have noticed that we prefer to sit at the end of the pews - myself included when I happen to be part of the congregation. What scares us so about sitting in the center? There is nothing wrong with those spots. The wooden pew is just as hard, the view is much the same and we will not suddenly hear an improvement in the music by sitting on the aisle.

From my perspective in the sanctuary, I see people sitting at the ends, leaving big gaping spaces in the middle. This is not a welcoming sign for people who arrive later and is especially problematic these days. We use only half of the pews, and so there are a lot fewer of these “first class” seats.

Many times, I have seen later arrivals prowling up and down the aisles looking for a seat, but all the ends are taken. Unfortunately, we act as though we expect no one to join us in our empty pew. But here is the deal: Think about leaving the end spots on a pew for those who arrive after us. Now, this might not apply to families with small children. But if singles and couples chose to scoot over and occupy the middle, we would create a welcoming space for those who arrive after us. If you sit in the middle, you boldly state that you are expecting more people to join you. As the Alka-Seltzer people used to say, “Try it, you’ll like it!”

A Social Justice Meditation

Belief in God and the worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are actually living in a way pleasing to God. Saint John Chrysostom expressed this pointedly when he wrote: “Do you wish to honor the body of the Savior? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honor it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold.”

Humankind, Pope Francis says in his third and latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (Brothers All), is in the midst of a worrying regression. People are intensely polarized. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of an extremist, myopic, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. Amid all that, the notion of a kinder, more respecting world “sounds like madness.”



Pope Francis

In *Fratelli Tutti*, the Holy Father makes an uncynical case for how people can reverse course. The document amounts to a papal stand against tribalism, xenophobia, and the dangers of the social media age.

“Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation. Conflict between different groups, if it abstains from enmities and mutual hatred, gradually changes into an honest discussion of differences founded on a desire for justice.”

Choir Spends a Virtual Happy Hour with Sarah Hart

Saint Ann Choir member Leo Robinson saw a recent post on Sarah Hart’s Facebook page: the multi-faceted Sarah, featured in two November concerts at Saint Raphael Parish last year, was available to host a Virtual Happy Hour. Leo responded, coordinated the event and, on October 15 the choir’s regular Thursday Zoom meeting became a happy hour indeed.



“Sarah told me we could just talk about music ministry in these Covid times,” Leo told us, “but, seriously I just wanted to hear her sing.” And she did, opening, at Leo’s request, with “You Are My Sunshine.” Then Sarah polled the dozen or so choir members who participated: As an opportunity to lift spirits and offset the times we are in, share three positive things that have happened during the past week. Responses included a 35th wedding anniversary, getting back to working with the little ones at school, a new kitty, a positive outcome to an arduous legal case.

Singing on Zoom, Mary Lee Frisbie said, is a bit of a challenge as Leo needed to mute the choir members in order not to interfere with Sarah’s singing. She did some requests (“Alleluia, Love Is Alive,” “Be Nice”), introduced a new song, “Blessed Are You,” and really seemed to enjoy the choir’s usual rehearsal banter. The brief but very enjoyable session closed with “Jesus, I Trust In You.” A “good ending, a very enjoyable time,” said Mary Lee, “since Sarah is so warm and engaging.”

Leo summed the evening up like this: “We laughed, we sang and I probably should have said a prayer at the beginning and especially at the end to remind myself how blessed I am to know Sarah Hart and especially my friends in the Saint Ann Choir.”

GIFT: Growing in Faith Together Exploring the Great Commandment

In Matthew's Gospel (22:37-40) a Pharisee tests Jesus by asking which commandment in the law is the greatest. Jesus replies, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."



Living the Moral Life
Love of God and Neighbor
In-Person Class Schedule:
Friday, November 20
6:30 - 8:00 pm
Sunday, November 22
12:00 Noon - 2:30 pm
Tuesday, November 24
6:30 - 8:00 pm
Saint Ann Parish Center Hall

For registered families and participants only.
No walk-ins permitted.

November's GIFT session will introduce the Ten Commandments, the first three, which might be called the "love God" commandments and the last seven, which are all about loving our neighbor. The topic engages everyone, encouraging them to think in new ways about how to love God by living the Ten Commandments in our lives, in our homes, and in our world.

The in-person dates at left are only for those who registered in advance. To request a change of date please notify Maria at atomasetti@snet.net or 203-988-8598 (voice or text) at least one week before the scheduled session.

If you have registered for GIFT's virtual option look for an email from Maria with information about dates and Zoom links for age-appropriate sessions.

Prior to the November sessions all registered families/participants will receive an email with a YouTube video of the welcome, the opening prayer, opening song, and Deacon George's presentation. Questions? Please reach out to Maria (as above).

**GIFT
Sacramental Program
Schedule**

First Reconciliation

Required Learning Session #1
In-Person:
Saturday, November 7
10:00 -11:30 a.m.
Virtual:
Tuesday, November 10
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Required Learning Session #2
In-Person:
Saturday, November 21
10:00 -11:30 a.m.
Virtual:
Tuesday, December 2
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Confirmation

In-Person:
Sunday, November 8
1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Virtual:
Wednesday, November 11
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
The Sacraments

For all Sacrament Sessions:
In-Person: Saint Ann
Parish Center Classrooms
Virtual: Zoom Information
to follow



GIFT Thanksgiving Project Food Collection for Parish Families in Need

Thanksgiving - a perfect time to thank the Lord for his many blessings, and to share them with others. The GIFT team will be collecting non-perishable foods at all of November's in-person sessions to help parish families in need.

T4S, our terrific Teens for Service group, will once again live up to their name, meeting in small, safely distanced groups to assemble the Thanksgiving baskets.

Please bring your donations - non-perishable food items only - to the GIFT and/or GIFT Sacramental session you attend. May God reward you for your kindness.



Very Special Celebrations in September and October Congratulations to our First Communicants

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Catherine Anne Barth
Keira Dowling
Justin Anthony Galligan
Aubree Catherine O'Neil
Penny Timmeny

Saturday, October 3, 2020

Mason Edward Fino
David Damian Liebelt
Luis Alexander Núñez
Nicole Sequera
Ashlyn Marie Smithauser
Christopher John Smithauser
Derek Tuba
Jack Ryan Utzler

Welcome to the table of the Lord! May God bless you always.

Confirmation Masses

Friday, October 30, 7:00 p.m. at Saint Gabriel Church

Friday, November 6, 7:00 p.m. at Saint Ann Church

Father John will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at two Masses this year. The bishop, as a successor of the apostles, is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, but there are times "when the bishop entrusts the celebration to a priest." (*U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults*, p. 206) Father John has asked for and received delegation from Archbishop Blair to confer the Sacrament at these Masses.

Attendance will be limited to the Confirmation candidates, their sponsors, a limited number of guests from Confirmation families and the liturgical ministers. Please pray for all of our candidates as they receive this Sacrament of Initiation and are blessed with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. *Come, O Holy Spirit, come.*



Congratulations !

On Saturday, September 26, Nicole Sequera met Jesus for the first time in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. What a very special day, Nicole. May you always remember how much God loves you.

Special Masses, Change of Seasons, Virtual Happy Hour and More!

On November's calendar: Thanksgiving Mass, Confirmation Mass, our annual Mass of Remembrance. We move from the green of Ordinary Time to the violet of Advent. Don't miss the notes about the choir's Virtual Happy Hour.



We remain in the season of new formats, for the Christmas Giving program, our Beth-El pizza dinners, for the GIFT program, too. Father John would like to see a new seating format in the pews as well. (Look for the details in *From Father John's Desk*.)

The focus of this month's Social Justice Meditation is *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis' third and latest encyclical. Enjoy each of November's thirty days.

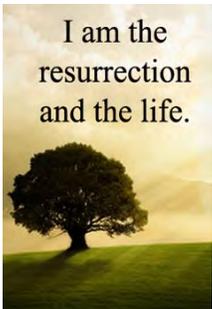
The Parish Press

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I am the
resurrection
and the life.

In Memoriam

Saint Raphael's mourns the recent loss of

Joan Kell
Richard Morrow

May Joan, Richard and all the faithful departed through the mercy of our loving God rest in peace.

Bereavement Support: Reach Out by Phone



If you are in mourning, grieving the loss of someone you love, please reach out to our Bereavement Support group for comfort and consolation. We have not resumed in-person meetings, but we are available to assist you. Call us at 203-877-4020. Share your burden.

We welcome your presence at November's Mass of Remembrance, offered for all those who have died during the past year. Look for details on page 1.

We Welcome With Love . . .

. . . the newest members of our parish family,

Olivia Grace Ferraiolo
Michael Schneider
Tucker Zoufaly

Olivia was baptized on Saturday, September 19, at Saint Ann's. Michael and Tucker received the life-giving waters of Baptism on Sunday, September 20, at Saint Gabriel's. May God bless you, little ones, and hold you always close to his heart.



Love and Best Wishes



as you begin your married life together. . .
Jay and Caitlin (Perry) Burns
who were married on Saturday, October 10,
at Saint Gabriel Church.

May God bless you with a warm love reaching out to others and good health until a ripe old age.

Creative Hands Delivers Gifts of Warmth and Love



Creative Hands was happy to deliver 35 shawls and lap robes, tucked into festive gift bags, to Saint Vincent's Medical Center early in October. The staff was most appreciative of these gifts of warmth and love, especially in light of all the COVID-19 cases they have had.

The group would be grateful for additional donations of yarn and gift bags. And if anyone has created prayer shawls or lap robes but can't get them to Saint Ann's, please let Val know. You can call her at 203-687-9568. Thank you.