# Parish Life & Times

ST. PATRICK PARISH NEWSPAPER

Nurtured by the Eucharist and the Word of God We Are a Welcoming Community

St. Patrick Parish
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# Life Is a Journey

## ...Let's Walk Together

Fr. Bob may have arrived at St. Pat's during a snowstorm, but his spirits are high as he looks forward to settling in and gaining some insight into what makes St. Pat's so special. Since his arrival on February 11th Fr. Bob has been highly visible and accessible within our faith community. His comforting, yet unassuming, presence is like a gentle breeze on a warm summer day, a ray of sunshine after a relentless storm and so much more.

Change isn't always easy and being reassigned to another parish is no exception. Unlike typical job changes, however, there are many more factors to consider. The reassigned priest doesn't simply assume a new position. He must leave his home, parish family and all that is familiar and enter uncharted territory. For Fr. Bob the move is a bit more daunting. Not only is he facing the typical stresses associated with a new job, but he has to hit the ground running as he strives to learn the ropes and guide us through our healing process at the same time.

Fr. Bob comes to us from St. Jude Parish in Budd Lake where he served as pastor for the past 12 years. He was planning to stay at St. Jude's and says "…when Bishop Serratelli approached me about coming to St. Pat's, I was surprised and humbled. I knew St. Pat's was a parish in crisis and I couldn't even begin to imagine the sense of loss that went along with those tragic events. I questioned whether I truly was the right person for the job so I did what most of you do in a tough situation, I prayed."

*Father Bob and one of our parishioners getting to know each other better outside of Mass*

After prayerful consideration, and strengthened by Bishop Serratelli's faith in him, Fr. Bob decided to accept the challenge. He goes on to say "…I couldn't have asked for a greater ministry. I'm overwhelmed by the confidence placed in me by Bishop Serratelli and the Diocese of Patterson. We all need to move beyond our comfort zones, to be stretched a little and accept life's challenges. It brings out wisdom, understanding and compassion we may not realize we have within us."

Fr. Bob is adjusting well to his new life at St. Pat's. "My welcome couldn't be better…" he says. "You have truly touched me with your outpouring of love, the meals, the gifts, the support of my extremely capable parish staff. All of these kindnesses are making my transition so much easier. I'm even beginning to recognize faces — but that's the easy part. Learning your names will take a great deal longer. So, please be patient with me. I look forward to journeying with you and continuing to build on Fr. Ed's goals for our warm and welcoming faith community."


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*Join Us For Our Ongoing Adult Scripture Sharing*
*Friday Mornings 9-10:30*
*or*
*Tuesday Evenings 7:30-9*

*No Pre-Registration Necessary*
*All Are Welcome*
*Call Peggy Gentile*
*973-635-0625*
*Ext 25*

***Join Us for Our Annual Mother's Day Retreat***

***This Year One Week before Mother's Day!***
***May 1-2***
***Come for the Day***
***or***
***Stay Overnight***
***at***
***Mount Carmel Retreat House***

***Look for Registration Information in the Sunday Bulletin***

***Call Terri McGovern 973-701-1027 for more information***

# Stewardship

## …Sharing Your Time, Talent and Treasure

When the results of our parish survey, feedback reports and listening sessions were announced in November 2007, stewardship emerged as one of the top priorities for our 2012 pastoral plan. The first step was to form a Stewardship Committee. Fr. Ed invited Jeff Vohden, Anne and Jim Greener, Tom Grimes, Judith Luke, John Polanin, Vince Volpicelli, and Deacon Joe Wisnewski to be members. The purpose of the committee is to raise awareness of stewardship and promote gifts of time, talent and treasure by our parishioners.

But first, the Stewardship Committee had to answer a fundamental question — what is stewardship? The key elements are welcoming members into our community, making a commitment to service and fellowship with other community members and inspiring all of us to more active participation in the life of our parish.

To reach this conclusion, the committee began by studying the US bishops' pastoral letter on Christian stewardship originally issued in 1992. Led in prayer by Deacon Joe, the committee met regularly to reflect and grow in understanding stewardship as part of every disciple's response to the call of Jesus, by becoming stewards of all creation, stewards of our own vocations and stewards of the Church community.

To translate the Stewardship Committee's vision into a practical, realistic plan, it identified the following steps for the ministries and members of our parish:

- personal witness
- commitment of leadership
- hospitality, evangelization and outreach
- communication and education
- recruiting, training and recognizing our gifts
- stewardship of treasure
- accountability

The goal was to formulate a stewardship plan applying these action steps to the key segments of our parish community — youth, families, seniors and singles. With this in mind, the committee held meetings with representatives of each group.

The committee also recognized the plan was most likely to succeed by building on the foundation of existing parish ministries and incorporating the key principles of stewardship within their programs. In the words of Jeff Vohden "…we were building a plan for a plan…" so that stewardship could become the framework that ties these ministries and programs together. The committee publishes an annual stewardship report of parish activities, financial accounts, sacramental statistics, ministry initiatives and other accomplishments. As Anne Greener says, "…our parish stewardship report is something we can be proud of."

The Pastoral Council formally approved the stewardship plan in January 2009. Since then, members of the committee met with the Liturgy Committee, the Faith Formation Program, Youth Ministry and the Finance Committee, who warmly accepted the committee's invitation to make stewardship part of their programs.

Yet, the work of the Stewardship Committee goes on! Communicating the message of stewardship remains a work in progress, and the next step is finding the best way to publicly "launch" our stewardship plan within our entire parish. The committee is looking for more members, so please contact Deacon Joe in the parish office at 973-635-0625 for more information about joining this ongoing mission to increase our practice of stewardship as disciples of Christ in the world today.

# Music Ministry Expands

St. Pat's Music Ministry is flourishing under the leadership of Richard Barnett. Here are some highlights of new and existing programs. Read on to see if one might be for you.

## Taizé…an Opportunity to Reflect

Have you heard about Taizé? It's a meditative prayer service that incorporates simple, repetitive songs and chants, scripture readings and periods of group silence in a setting of peace and soft light that fosters communion with God. Taizé offers you an opportunity to worship in a community setting, yet remain open to the voice of God and discover the prayer within you. Each session concludes with Benediction.

Taizé is offered periodically throughout the year. Generally, sessions are held once a week over a period of several weeks. You may join us for one or more services — it's up to you. The most recent session just ended, so watch the bulletin for news about upcoming Taizé events. Why not give Taizé a try and see what it's all about?

## Ongoing Music Programs

Here is a brief overview of our music programs.

***Children's Choir,*** which sings at the 9:00 a.m. liturgy every other Sunday, is open to parish children in Grades 1st through 5th. There are two opportunities to rehearse — Wednesdays **or** Thursdays from 5:30–6:30 p.m.

***Spirit Song*** (Middle School Choir), like the Children's Choir, also sings at the 9:00 a.m. liturgy, but it alternates Sundays with the Children's Choir. This choir, which is open to parish children in Grades 6th through 8th, also has two rehearsal choices — Wednesdays **or** Thursdays from 6:30–7:30 p.m.

***God Unplugged*** (High School and Young Adult Choir) sings at the 6:00 p.m. Sunday liturgy. Rehearsals are on Tuesdays from 7:30–9:00 p.m. **and/or** on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. immediately before Mass.

***St. Patrick Choir*** (High School through Adults) sings at the 11:00 a.m. liturgy and for special music programs. Rehearsals take place on Thursdays from 7:30– 9:00 p.m.

## Can't Commit on a Regular Basis?

In addition to its ongoing music programs, the Music Ministry also presents special programs throughout the year. So, if you like to sing, but can't commit to a regular choir and rehearsal schedule, you may still want to participate in one of our other special programs. To prepare for these projects, you may use CDs to learn your part and attend rehearsals on a limited basis.

For more information contact Richard Barnett at 973-635-0625 x 31 or via email at richautosound@gmail.com.

*The cast of "Chimes in the Night"*

*Camels and lambs were among the talent*

*The cast of "Godspell" in rehearsal*

*Mark your calendar for this year's summer camp musical*
*"The Rock Slinger and His Greatest Hit"*
*A musical comedy based on the story of*
*David and Goliath (featuring a 9 foot tall giant)!*
*Performance is July 1st at 7:00 p.m.*

# Our Pastoral Plan

## …A Road Map to the Future

St. Pat's is now only two years away from celebrating its 125th anniversary. Back in 2007 we began preparing for this significant milestone by examining where we were at that point and where we hoped to be in 2012 (our anniversary year). As many of you may recall, our first step was reaching out to you for feedback. We accomplished this through a parish-wide listening process, survey and parish assembly. A thorough analysis of the data gathered helped us to identify seven key areas of parish life — leadership, teaching, Christian community, worship, stewardship, evangelization and service — on which to focus.

After the identification phase was complete, we formulated specific goals and plans for each of the targeted areas and created implementation groups to coordinate the efforts of our parishioners, pastoral staff and ministries to achieve our established objectives. To help us realize our vision, we developed a road map to follow over the five-year period leading up to our 125th anniversary.

Michael Brough, a member of the Pastoral Council says "…we believe we've made good progress. Yet, we do recognize this is a marathon, not a sprint. After all, the call to faithful discipleship and growing in our faith can't be achieved simply by following a pastoral plan — no matter how well thought out it is. Instead, it requires good planning, allied with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our hearts."

The Pastoral Council and parish staff have shared the pastoral plan with Fr. Bob and are meeting with him to confirm the parish priorities for the year ahead. The article on Stewardship (page 2) is an example of the progress made in implementing our pastoral priorities. Future issues of *Parish Life & Times* will highlight other areas of growth as we do our best to live out our faith within our parish community.

To find out more about our pastoral plan and to contribute your gifts and talents to our parish, please contact any member of the Pastoral Council or parish staff. You can find contact information in the Sunday bulletin and on our website at www.St-Pats.org. You also can email us at PastoralCouncil@St-Pats.org.

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# Faith Formation is Alive and Well

## …Ginny Salvatore Reflects on Her First Year

Ginny Salvatore, Director of Faith Formation, says "…my first year at St. Pat's went quite smoothly thanks to the help of the parish staff and many wonderful parishioners." Through conversations with catechists and parents, Ginny learned about the parish community and its needs and desires for the future of our children's faith formation. As a result, St. Pat's expanded its religious education program to offer an alternative to the traditional Sunday morning time slot for children in grades one through six. Now they may choose between Tuesday afternoon **or** Sunday morning classes

Since the church is more readily available on Tuesday afternoons, students now have the flexibility to participate in special events such as church tours, prayer services and other liturgical experiences. This adds a new dimension to the program, thereby enhancing their religious education with "hands on" experience. Ginny also invites children who attend class on Sunday or who are on home study "…to join us for these special events".

Religious education for kindergarteners, seventh and eighth graders continue to be held on Sunday mornings, but the seventh and eighth grade program now follows a Youth Ministry model which will be expanded to include sixth graders next year. The year began with a parent/teen orientation and the introduction of a new curriculum Catholic Connections, a handbook for middles schoolers and will conclude with a NET Retreat in the spring.

For more information on any of these programs, contact Ginny Salvatore at 973-635-0625 extension 27 or via email at vsalvatore@st-pats.org.