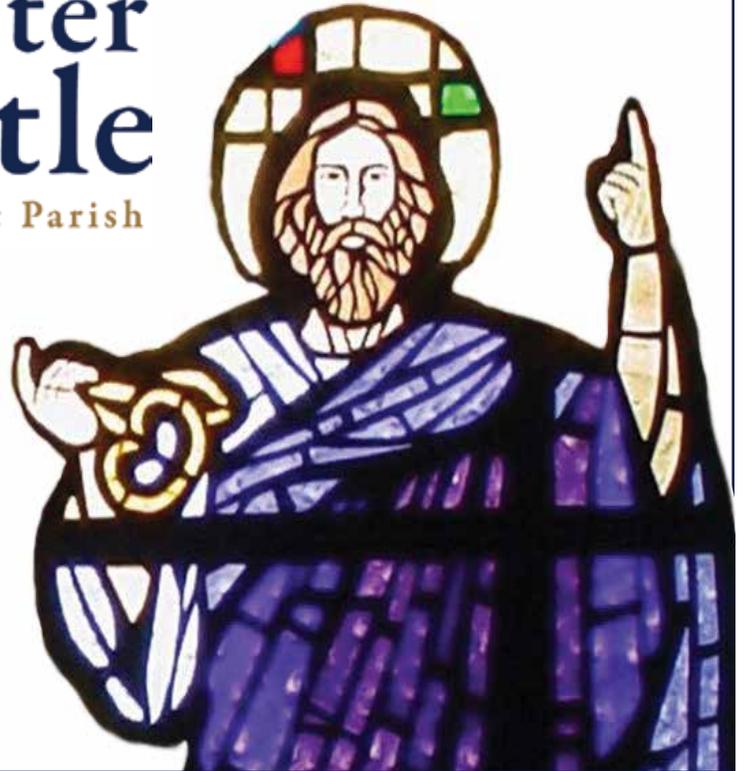




# Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Parish



## MASS SCHEDULE

**Saturday Anticipated:** 5:30 PM

**Sunday:** 7:30 AM, 9 AM\*, 11:15 AM\*

\*Nursery available

**Chapel Weekday Mass:** 7:30 AM

**Holy Days:** 8:30 AM and 7 PM

**Saturday Reconciliation:** 4:30 PM – 5 PM

12.2014

## Outreach Ministries *Touches Lives in Our Community*

The Outreach Ministries at St. Peter's have been preparing for a Christmas season geared towards bringing the message of Christ's birth to many in our community who might be overlooked in all the festivities.

Cathy Scanlon, Outreach Chair, says the response from our parishioners to the needs of those served has been "a phenomenal experience" for her. These efforts begin during the first Sunday of Advent for the St. Nicholas Project, when a basket of cards listing needs in the community is placed in the narthex. Parishioners choose a card from the basket, purchase the items requested, and return them to the church, "We sort and deliver the gifts to agencies, like Social Apostolate, Senior Services, and Savannah Care Center," Cathy says.



The Christmas Angel Tree is another project coordinated by the Outreach Ministries. "It's a nationwide project," Cathy says. "We held children whose parents are incarcerated. The parents are interviewed and they say what the needs are for their child or children. They also write a personal note to the

*continued on back cover*

### December 8

Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary  
8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

### December 11

Advent Penance Service, 7 p.m.

### December 24

Christmas Eve Masses,  
4 p.m. (Youth Choir) and  
6 p.m. (Adult Choir)

### December 25

Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

### December 31

New Year's Eve Mass,  
5:30 p.m. Vigil

### January 1

New Year's Day,  
10 a.m. Mass

## CHRISTMASTIME STEWARDSHIP

# *To Be a Christ-Bearer*

It is not uncommon to give gifts during Advent and Christmas, but it is never enough just to leave it at that. True, Jesus gave *Himself* to us at the first Christmas. And, as always, we should strive to imitate Him by giving of *ourselves* in some way as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth. But there is a way to give even more than just ourselves – by giving the gift of Christ to others. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are perfect opportunities to share the love and message of Jesus with others in a beautiful way.

Of course, giving of ourselves in imitation of Jesus is a beautiful thing. But it is just as important to remember that, as human beings, we bear the likeness of God. As Christians, Jesus Himself inhabits our very souls. As Catholics, our Lord literally dwells within us when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Based upon this logic, we do so much more than imitate Jesus when we selflessly give of ourselves to others. Indeed, just as Mary carried Christ in her womb when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, that first Advent, and just as she brought Him in her arms to Simeon as a newborn child that first Christmas season, we can also literally bring Jesus Christ to the world.

What a profound task Our Lord has laid out for us this season! As He grew in Mary's womb during that first

Advent, Jesus could only go where Mary chose to take Him. Of course, He couldn't do anything – He couldn't even speak. Mary became His hands and feet, and even His voice. Mary could have stayed at home during her pregnancy, resting and preparing for life with a newborn, as most mothers do. But instead, the Blessed Mother helped her Son begin His mission by bringing Him to her cousin, Elizabeth. Today, in much the same way, Christ invites us to share Him with the rest of the world. He chooses to make His presence known through us. And so, as the spiritual writer Caryl Houselander beautifully states, "We must carry Jesus in our hearts wherever He wants us to go, and there are many places to which He may *never* go unless we take Him to them."

How do we bring Jesus to those in our parish and community? There are many ways. We might visit with a sick parishioner over the holidays, providing fellowship and support in their time of need. We may consider serving a local soup kitchen or food bank, and doing our part to make sure that the hungry are fed. We can sing Christmas carols for our neighbors, bringing true joy and love to their homes. Perhaps we could help a tired friend clean her house, making her life a little bit easier during this busy season. Or we can share the Good News of

Jesus Christ with others. We might even try going to work with a cheery disposition, or donating money so that a starving child in a poor country can have something to eat. These are just a few examples of how we can practice stewardship.

We may sometimes feel as if our efforts are in vain – especially when it is hard to see the effects of our evangelization. This temptation is particularly strong when we offer our treasure as a gift to God. The positive effects of monetary gifts aren't always as visible as gifts of time or talent. But when we give of our treasure, the love of Jesus can travel to places we could never go. While our gift may not directly affect someone in a positive way, it very well may enable someone else to do it for us. Sometimes God doesn't just ask *us* to be His hands and feet, but to enable *someone else* to be them, as well.

Advent and Christmas give us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to live as stewards and disciples of His Word. God has put us in a particular place, given us a certain amount of time, asked us to perform particular tasks, and to selflessly share a portion of our gifts. This is all for a singular purpose – to bring His Son into the world, and make Christ's presence just as real as when He first became man more than 2,000 years ago.



## *A Letter from Our Pastor*

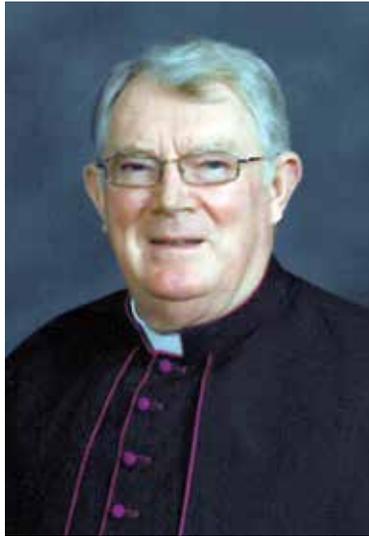
# December, A Journey of Fulfillment

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

You and I are on a journey together – what I have called a stewardship journey. But, of course, it is much more than that. During this month of December, as we prepare for Christmas throughout Advent, that journey becomes even more special.

“God bless us, every one.” If that sounds familiar to you, it probably should. Those are the words used by the character Tiny Tim in Charles Dickens’ classic A Christmas Carol. The little boy says these words twice – the first time as a blessing at their Christmas dinner; the second at the very end of the story. Those are words we need to keep in mind throughout our Advent and Christmas journey. They are words that should be close to us in our effort to live stewardship as a way of life.

Stewardship involves a conversion of heart, much like how Ebenezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol undergoes a conversion. Throughout the story, Scrooge goes through four levels of conversion – he acknowledges his sinfulness, experiences regret, repents for his sins, and as a result, he ultimately achieves salvation. Scrooge’s conversion is a wonderful example of how we all must embark on our own journey to prepare our hearts for the arrival of Christ.



Christmas represents one of the most important stories of our faith. It is the story of Jesus born in a simple manger; of shepherds coming to visit Him; and of kings following a star to find the infant. Each part of that story contains an important stewardship message. As for the child, He would become the one who consistently teaches us to give and to serve. Yet, He enters this world needing great assistance. He teaches us there is no shame in being poor, and there is no

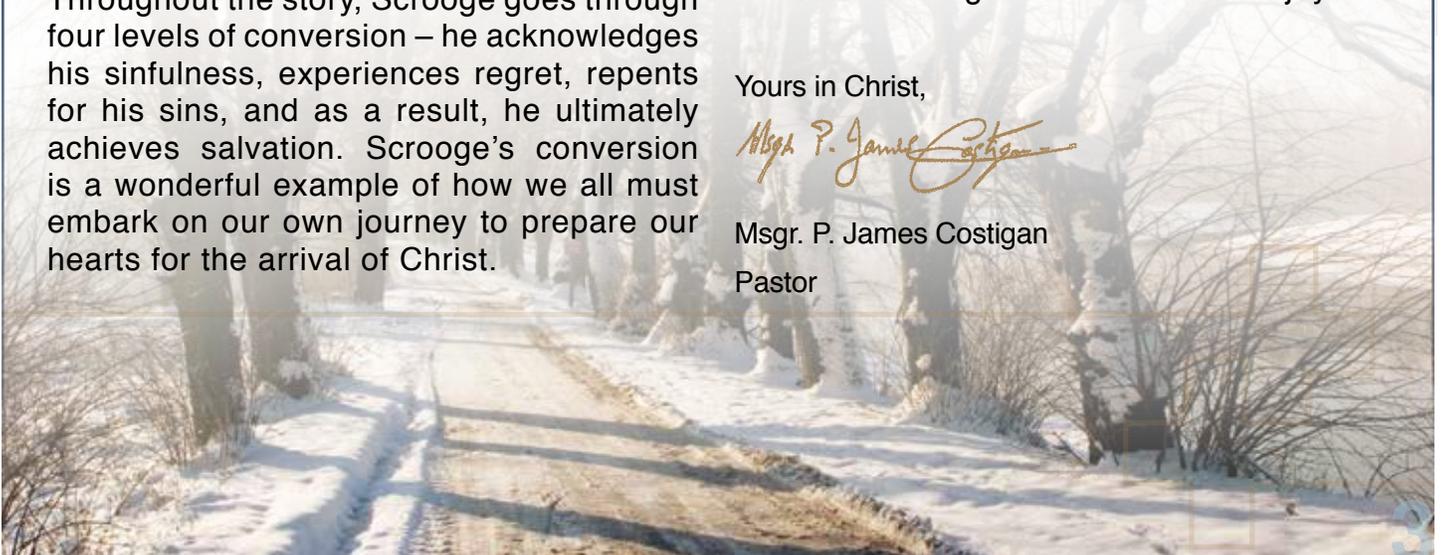
shame in grasping humility. The shepherds came from the fields with just themselves and their sheep. Their lesson is that we all have something to give, even if it is ourselves and our prayers. Those are important. The kings were men of means. They show us that we need to do more than worship. We need to bring something to give, as well.

Yes, we are on a journey – a wonderful journey together. God is speaking to us, but we must take the time to listen. If we do, this will be a fulfilling month infused with joy.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Msgr. P. James Costigan". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

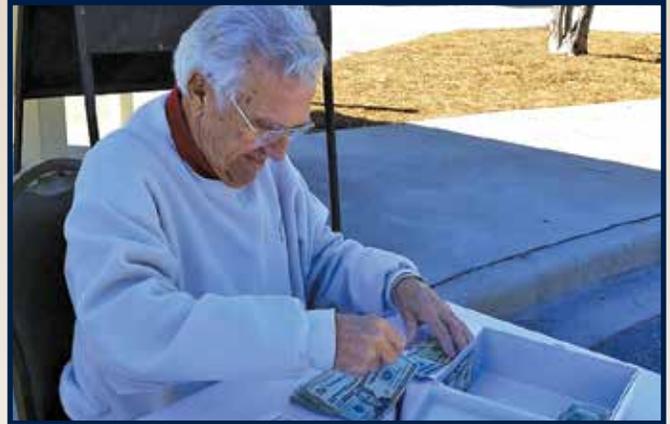
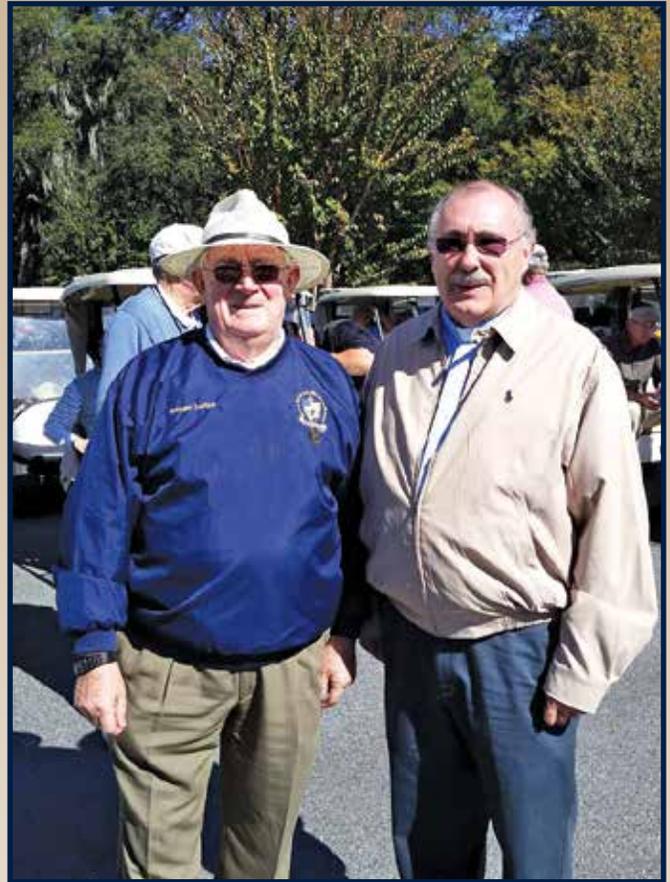
Msgr. P. James Costigan  
Pastor



# A Look Back at Recent Activities in Our Parish

Our parish family has shared in a number of special activities this autumn. On Nov. 3, our Annual Golf and Tennis Tournament took place. All proceeds from the tournament went towards the Parish Tuition Assistance Fund for students at St. Peter the Apostle School. Our Golf Tournament winners were the team of Brian McCarthy, Dennis Bar, Shawn Sims and Neal Bright – Jerry Wilhelm also had a hole in one! The tennis winners were by level – Ashley Cetti, 3.0; Kristy Thorstad, 3.5; and Ana Kay Amerson, 4.0. Then, on Nov. 20, we celebrated as our students made their Confirmation. We congratulate those who were confirmed, as they celebrate this sacrament with their families and our parish community!





# Giving Thanks, Giving Food

## Looking Back on Our School's Thanksgiving Food Drive

Thanksgiving is a time when families and friends reflect on all they have and come together in gratitude for all the blessings they have received. Unfortunately, there are many families who do not have everything they need due to financial hardships. That's why the students of St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School have participated each year in the school's Thanksgiving Food Drive.

"For me, I'm the advisor but also my child goes to school here – I see a food drive like this as definitely being in the spirit of mercy and the spirit of loving concern," says Maggie McAllister, Advisor for the Catherine McAuley Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society, which sponsors the food drive along with the Student Council. "We as a school are blessed to have so many gifts. The students and the parents and the faculty all want to share with those who need help, especially in the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. And we want the kids to understand that sharing with others is a worthwhile activity – it's part of what we do. We do it not only through the food drive, but every month we have an 'out of uniform' day and we pick different charities to give money to. We are truly involved in having our kids live out that idea of mercy and loving concern for others."

The Thanksgiving Food Drive has been an annual activity of the Honor Society and the Student Council that starts in early November and continues until Thanksgiving. The

students in all classes bring canned food items.

"This is a way for every student to get involved and feel like they are participating in school functions," Mrs. McAllister says. "Sports are more geared to the older children and some things are more for the younger students. This is school-wide, and it gives the opportunity for all students to participate in something important."

During the Thanksgiving Food Drive, there was a competition among the classes to bring in the highest number of canned food items. Each class had



a fake turkey, and for every five cans that a class brought in, one feather was placed on their turkey. This practice is called "Dressing the Turkey," and the class in the lower wing and the class in the upper wing with the most feathers on their turkey both received a prize at the end of the drive.

The Thanksgiving Food Drive has been an important annual activity for our school that has allowed students, faculty and parents to make a real difference for a number of families that need help during the holidays.

"Our kids look to us to be role models," Mrs. McAllister says. "I'm blessed to be a teacher as well as a parent, and my son looks to me to lead by example. Our parents do so much for us at the school and this is one way, along with the faculty and staff here at St. Peter's, that the parents are involved in their child's education and spiritual growth."

"One of the best benefits of Catholic education is that we do have this part of our school life that is not just educational, it is about giving and sharing with the community," she continues. "I think the parents understand that and they try to support us whenever possible. Whenever we need something, they are always there to help us and their students. And it's not just with bringing food in. When we actually start moving the food to the parish pantry, we've got parents that come over and help with that. Parents are involved because they want to be role models for their kids, and this is a great way to do it."

# LifeTeen Mass and Band Bring Our Youth Ministry to a New and Exciting Level

*“Even though you are young, the time for action is now... It is time to let your light shine!” - Pope St. John Paul II, 1999*

This past summer, members of our LifeTeen Ministry attended the Steubenville Youth Conference in Atlanta. The weekend provided an opportunity for our high school youth to gather with other Catholic teens from around the country. From the opening session on Friday night to the concluding Mass on Sunday, the conference weekend was set up to challenge, inspire and help Catholic teens reach a deeper understanding and appreciation of their faith.

“The conference was just amazing,” says Lisa Fogarty, Youth Minister. “There was so much fire and energy with the youth in their faith. The lines for Reconciliation were unbelievably long, and we attended several Masses and a truly inspiring adoration on Saturday night. There were lots of emotion, tears and energy! The youth were definitely filled with the Holy Spirit and were hungry to experience their faith on a whole different level with contemporary music, youthful and engaging speakers, and just an excitement and energy that I have never experienced before. We came back inspired to start having a LifeTeen Mass once a month here in the parish.”

And that’s exactly what happened when, this past October, the very first LifeTeen Mass was held. From the moment Mass began, a vibrant spirituality was evident as everyone joined voices to sing the lyrics for the gathering song, “Burning in My Soul”: I cannot contain it, this fire inside – I cannot contain it, so let it shine – I cannot contain it, this light of mine – It’s burning in my soul. The celebrant, Fr. Paul, reflected on the Gospel reading taken from Matthew 22:15-21 and challenged the youth with the thought, “Whose face is on your coin, Caesar’s or God’s?” And because the purpose of a youth Mass is to encourage participation, many of our high school students were involved. Jenna Ason and Kiki Rodriguez were lectors, several teens volunteered as ushers and gift bearers, and everyone lifted their voices to sing along with our brand new LifeTeen Band.

“The Mass was absolutely fabulous,” Lisa says. “The church was packed, and because we planned the Mass to coincide with the Confirmation Retreat, there were a lot of families. You could feel the high energy, and you could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

Of course, music is an important part of every LifeTeen

Mass, and Lisa notes that our new LifeTeen Band provides Christian contemporary music – complete with drums and guitars – as a way to meet our youth where they are in their lives. In other words, music allows today’s Catholic youth to experience the Mass on a level to which they can relate, and one which invites them to become actively engaged in the Mass.



“We are very fortunate to have a LifeTeen band,” Lisa says. “Ron Winders (percussion) and Brandon Jacques (vocals), who both have been youth ministers in LifeTeen bands in the past, approached me about starting one here. They are truly inspirational and dedicated to our youth. Other members of the band include Kevin Wertz (guitar), Mike McLaughlin (guitar), Frances Beidler (piano), and Eddie Seginack (piano and tambourine). As we move forward, we hope to get more youth involved as well.”

And this is just the beginning. Presently, a youth Mass is planned for the third Sunday of every month, but Lisa says that long-term goals include making it a weekly event. Additionally, while Lisa and band leaders Ron and Brandon coordinate the Masses using a LifeTeen Liturgy Planning Guide, they hope to form a planning team to get more people involved.

In the meantime, though, there is no doubt that the addition of the LifeTeen Mass, as well as the wonderful music provided by the LifeTeen Band, has brought the parish Youth Ministry to another exciting level – one which encourages teens to celebrate their faith, live their faith, and actively participate in the Mass.



# Saint Peter the Apostle

Catholic Parish

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## Outreach Ministries *continued from front cover*

child. We buy, wrap and put the note from the parents into the gifts and deliver them to the children in our area. We usually buy for 25 to 30 children, all ages, and we buy for all the children in the family.”

The Outreach Ministries also works with an inner city church to provide gifts for a family through an “adopt a family and child,” program, Cathy notes. “It’s a great thing for a family to do,” Cathy says. “We encourage that with our families or a group.” As part of our parish’s participation in the Interfaith Hospitality, St. Peter’s will be hosting homeless families at the parish center the week of Dec. 28.

“We host them three weeks each year and we happen to have them at Christmas,” Cathy says. “We also do it in July for two weeks.” Parishioners purchase gifts for the children and prepare meals for the families. “We need people to stay with them, entertain them and purchase gifts,” she says.

Cathy says the Interfaith Hospitality Ministry calls on different churches in the community to host families because many of the homeless shelters do not serve families.

Churches take turns providing temporary shelter as Interfaith Hospitality works to find jobs and permanent housing for the families, while also offering financial counseling.

“It’s temporary help until they can find permanent housing, and it’s all to keep the family together,” Cathy says. “Families are interviewed by Interfaith Hospitality to determine if they are a good candidate for the program. The typical stay is three to four months. They don’t want them to leave the program until they can be housed. “This summer with Interfaith Hospitality, we helped three families for two weeks and we had at least 60 to 70 parish families involved in helping,” she continues. “Our Knights of Columbus, our school kids and CCD kids all got involved, as well as our Youth Group. It’s great for individuals and families. It’s a teaching opportunity for what our Baptism promise means. It’s a great learning experience for our young people, and a great stewardship opportunity to learn about helping the less fortunate.”

Anyone interested in helping with Outreach Ministries, or to sponsor a child or family may contact Cathy Scanlon at 912-897-6664.