

# Faith Weavers of St. Mary

## January 2009 Newsletter

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### Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following services. All of these services will be at St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Shepherd starting at 4 pm.

#### **February 8, 2009, Prayer Service with Karon Latham.**

Following our prayer service we will celebrate with a pasta and chocolate dinner. All the fixin's for us to celebrate Valentine's Day and Community.

#### **March 8, 2009, Mass with Fr. Bert Gohm.**

To chase the final winter blahs away, we will have one of our famous Soup and Salad dinners. We will need a few volunteers to bring a soup or a salad. Watch for more details about this meal coming over the Faith Weavers' email list as we get closer to this date.

#### **April 19, 2009, Prayer Service with Joe Frankenfield. (Please note this is the third Sunday in April.)**

A Ham and Cheesy Potato dinner will be waiting for us following our service.

#### **May 10, 2009 Mass with Fr. Fred Kawka**

We will celebrate Mother's Day with a brunch. Plan to honor the women in your life by celebrating their gifts to us at this special mass and meal.

We don't want anyone to miss a service because of lack of transportation. Please call Dave Karmon at 773-6335 if you need a ride. If you have to leave a message please include your name, phone number, address, and a description of where you live.

Date	Time	Activity
February 8 <sup>th</sup>	4 pm	Prayer service with Karon Latham
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	4 pm	Mass with Father Bert Gohm
3 <sup>rd</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup>	3 pm	Spirituality & Aging led by Barbara Frankenfield
7 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup>	10 am	Workshops on Centering Prayer led by Virginia Cox.
21 <sup>st</sup>	10 am	Quiet Day led by Rev. Frens
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	4 pm	Prayer service with Joe Frankenfield
May 10 <sup>th</sup>	4 pm	Mass with Father Fred Kawka

### Center for Christian Spirituality

Members of St. John's Episcopal Church began the Center for Christian Spirituality this fall. This is an ecumenical endeavor open to all in our community. The Center provides interesting workshops on spiritual topics and an opportunity for personal reflection and spiritual growth. The Center provides a unique opportunity to explore the spiritual dimension of one's life. You are invited and encouraged to take part in one or more of these programs. Below is the schedule through March.

Opportunities for personal spiritual direction, starting January. Call Henry L. Fulton at 773-7193.

Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> - Quiet Day for District Clergy. Led by Rev. William P. Spaid, Diocese of Western Michigan. Clergy only.

Tuesdays in March (3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>) @ 3 pm - Spirituality & Aging. Led by Barbara Frankenfield, Commission on Aging, Isabella Co. Sponsored by the Faith Weavers. Registration deadline: February 15th.

Saturdays, March 7th & 14th @ 10 am - Workshops on Centering Prayer. Led by Virginia LaDare Cox. Sponsored by the Diocese of Western Michigan. Participants must plan to attend both sessions. Registration deadline: February 20th.

Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> @ 10 am - Quiet Day. Led by Rev. Mary Frens, St. Mark's, Newaygo. Registration deadline: March 15th.

Cost to all participants: \$25 each program. To register, call St. John's at 773-7448. For further information, call 773-7193.

## Friends of El Salvador

A delegation from the Faith Weavers' community consisting of Dave Dreyer and his daughter Theresa, Tom and Gail Moore, and Nancy Nerbonne visited the communities of Miramar and Milagro de Dios last November. The trip was designed to reaffirm our solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

The delegation was received with tremendous warmth, gratitude, and affection that cannot be overstated. Nancy described her experiences on the trip at the Faith Weavers' December gathering. Her words and photos expressed the profound emotional effect the visit had on all the delegates. She shared the impact our support has on the spirit of the people of Miramar and Milagro de Dios, as well as improving the physical well being of these communities. In both communities the people told the delegates that Faith Weavers are "family" and all are welcome to visit the community; they think about us and pray for us regularly, wishing us all health and the "peace of God." Nancy discovered, and conveyed to us, that their prayers and care for us, strengthens our community as well.

The delegation spent two nights receiving the generous kindnesses and hospitality of the poor in Miramar, a humbling experience, with many memorable moments. The delegates had productive discussions and agreed to fund a proposal for \$1,000 to clear a wildly overgrown site for construction of a soccer field for the youth; it's a major community priority to provide constructive after-school activities. They gave a gift of \$250 to fund the purchase of about 35 plastic chairs for the recently constructed community center. Currently Miramar residents must bring their own chairs to the center for events – that is, if they have chairs at all.

In Milagro de Dios they were received with a joyful "fiesta" and much public and personal appreciation for the help we have given. Near Milagro de Dios they had lunch with a group that included six of our high school scholarship recipients, who are engaging young people with impressive aspirations and maturity.

This year we will continue our support of the communities of Miramar and Milagro de Dios by

funding 20 scholarships and the construction of a chapel for Miramar. The people of Miramar have dreamed of having a chapel for many years. They have requested funding for a chapel from the very first visit we made to their village. They have been persistent in their request for aid in building a sacred space for communal religious gatherings and personal prayer.

The Friends of El Salvador Committee have discussed their requests for some time and have come to understand the need for a chapel to support the spiritual life of the village. The committee engaged in extensive discussion of this project and came to consensus that it is a worthy project to support. The cost of approximately \$6,500 is modest by U.S. standards but it is a substantial amount to the citizens of Miramar. The chapel will be constructed as a *galera* which is an open structure with a roof and pillars, but no walls. The community has purchased the land for the chapel and is waiting for our funding of the construction materials.

This is a new initiative for the Friends of El Salvador so please consider a donation to this project.

## Outreach Activities at Faith Weavers

Here are some of the things we have been supporting as a faith community:

- ✓ We have given approximately \$7,500 to support people in El Salvador.
- ✓ We have given over \$7,200 to local charities.
- ✓ We have established an Adopt-a-Family program in cooperation with Listening Ear.
- ✓ We made donations of food to the local Food Pantry.
- ✓ We have participated in the local Crop Walk.
- ✓ We participated in Christmas Outreach.
- ✓ We had a booth at the CMU Wares Fair.
- ✓ We are cooperating with the Wesley Center on Student Outreach Activities.

## Financial Report

	<u>12/31/2008</u>		
Donations		\$24,471	100%
Expenses			
- Charitable Giving	\$15,810		65%
- Services	\$4,157		17%
- Administration	\$1,623		7%
Total Expenses		<u>\$21,590</u>	
Donations over Expenses		\$2,881	12%
Beginning Balance		<u>\$9,880</u>	
Ending Balance		\$12,761	

This financial report is a measure of your generous support for the Faith Weavers of St. Mary community and the good works it conducts. The donations include the continuing support received at our monthly prayer services plus the donations designated for the Friends of El Salvador. This report shows expense of Faith Weavers in dollars and as a percent of donations. We give 65% of donations to others in our local, national, and international communities. Because we are an all volunteer organization we have very low operating costs. Seventeen percent of donations were used to conduct the monthly prayer services and social gatherings. Seven percent covered administrative costs such as insurance premiums, and supplies. We had an increase in our cash balance primarily because your generosity exceeded our expectations. We planned to maintain funds to support a year's activities, and our cash balance is now more than enough to do this.

### This Year's Budget

	<u>2009 Budget</u>		
Donations		\$27,980	100%
Expenses			
- Charitable Giving	\$21,370		76%
- Services	\$3,750		13%
- Administration	\$5,165		18%
Total Expenses		<u>\$30,285</u>	
Donations over Expenses		-\$2,305	-7%
Beginning Balance		<u>\$12,761</u>	
Ending Balance		\$10,456	

This year's budget reflects our confidence in your continuing financial support for our community. Donation increases above last year's level is primarily due to incorporating the Friends of El Salvador activities into Faith Weavers. The increase in administrative expenses is also due to the Friends of El Salvador. We have committed to paying the administrative expenses associated with projects in Miramar and Milagro de Dios. This will allow all gifts to Friends of El Salvador to go completely to program activities. Finally, we have planned a decrease in our cash balance. We do not want to accumulate a large cash balance, but use your donations to support community activities.

### Christmas Outreach – Thanks for your generous support:

Many thanks to all of you who helped with Christmas Outreach this year. Surely your Christmas was enriched by your service to others.

Your contributions of items for the Christmas stockings were greatly appreciated. This year, they were especially important because elementary schools were closed on the day we filled stockings, and we could not get the items students had contributed. Thanks to Faith Weavers' generosity, we filled 400 stockings anyway. Many Faith Weavers members also assisted with the food set-up and distribution; sorting of new children's toys, and distribution of goods to recipients.

### Faith Weavers' Website

The Faith Weavers' website is up and running and full of useful information about our community. It can be found at [www.faithweavers.org](http://www.faithweavers.org). On this site we have the history and structure of our community, descriptions of committees, and email contact forms. We provide news about our various outreach activities like the Friends of El Salvador and the work of our Endowment Fund. You can find the schedule of upcoming events and much more. Please visit the website and use it to keep informed about our faith community life.

## **Faith Weavers Endowment Fund**

The Faith Weavers Endowment Fund has been established with an initial amount of \$181,277.46. The funding for the Endowment Fund came from an agreement with Bishop Carlson to divide the St. Mary's University Parish Foundation between the Diocese of Saginaw and Faith Weavers of St. Mary. These funds were received in July 2008. Through stock market turmoil this past fall this fund has been kept safe in a cash account. The Investment Committee for the Endowment is now working on investment policies and establishing a portfolio that conforms to these policies.

The Board of Trustees for the Endowment has already authorized a distribution of \$10,500 to charitable organizations:

- \$2,600 for Scholarships for students in the San Vicente area of El Salvador.
- \$1,000 for the Saginaw house of the Sisters of Saint Clare (Poor Clare's).
- \$4,000 for the Goodrow Foundation.
- \$1500 for Christmas Outreach
- \$700 for Heifer International
- \$700 for Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission

Do you have a charity you believe is worthy of a grant? Please contact Anne Casey, Barb Frankenfield, Jane Leroux-Evans, or Karen Lee and tell them about it. We are always looking for charities to support.

Please keep the Endowment Fund in mind when doing your estate planning. It is a good place for a part of your estate to continue your generous support for others after you have departed.

If you have already recognized the St. Mary's Foundation in your estate plan, please update your plan to make it clear you want your bequest to go to the Faith Weavers Endowment Fund.