

Faith Weavers of St. Mary February 2010 Newsletter

www.faithweavers.org

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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following services.

Date	Time	Activity
February 28 th	4 pm	Book Study Group
March 14 th	4 pm	Prayer Service with Karon Latham
April 11 th	4 pm	Mass with Fr. Joe Fix
April 24 th	8:30 am	Retreat led by Karon Latham
May 9 th	4 pm	Prayer Service with Joe Frankenfield
June 13 th	4 pm	Mass with Fr. Joe Schabel
March 28 th	4 pm	Book Study Group

Monthly Prayer Services and Social Gatherings

All of these services will be at St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Shepherd starting at 4 pm. We will continue our pattern of having services on the second Sunday of the month. So, get into the habit of reserving the Second Sunday for Faith Weavers.

March 14, 2010, Prayer Service with Karon Latham presiding. - We will have an Irish stew dinner with all food provided by the Social Committee.

April 11, 2010, Mass celebrated with Fr. Joe Fix. - We will have an Easter dinner with ham and cheesy potatoes. Please bring a side dish.

May 9, 2010, Prayer Service with Joe Frankenfield presiding. - This will be a Mother's Day Brunch. Please bring a dish to pass.

June 13, 2010, Mass celebrated with Fr. Joe Schabel. - We will have a Hawaiian Dinner with Roast Pork, Cranberry Chicken, and Rice. Please bring a dish to pass.

Book Study Group

The book study group is meeting on the 4th Sunday of each month from 4:00 to 5:30 pm at St. Vincent DePaul Parish hall. We are currently reading Letters to Exodus Christians by Fr. Edward Hays. The book affirms our small faith community's efforts to weave faith into life and it has stimulated some very interesting discussions about the plight of the laity in today's environment. You can purchase the book online and are welcome to attend the book study meetings.

You can also keep up with the discussion by reading summaries posted to the Faith Weavers website. Just go to the "Community" tab on the navigation bar and click on "Book Study Group." Then click on the date of the session you would like to review.

Retreat on April 24, 2010

Karon Latham is leading a retreat on April 24, 2010 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Lutz's Edelweiss Haus. It will be a day of interesting presentations and discussions with ample free time for reflection and relaxation. Good food prepared by Libby Clark will accent the delights of this day. The retreat is open to all, but there is limited space available. You can reserve a space by sending \$10.00 non-refundable payment to: David Karmon, 4636 East Millbrook Road, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858. Make your check out to Faith Weavers of St. Mary and write "retreat" in the memo section of the check. No further payment is required for this retreat, but we will accept a freewill offering to defray some of the cost of conducting it.

Tornado Picnic

Plans are underway for the 4th annual Tornado Picnic. Jeff Angera and Todd Galgoci will again host this gale-awe event at the South Park Beach on Lake Isabella. Details will be sent when we get closer to July.

Outreach Activities in 2009

Charitable Contributions

Last year your generosity has supported grants of \$49,682 to local, national, and international charitable organizations. This money has come from your monthly donations and income from the Faith Weavers Endowment Fund.

The Service and Justice Committee and the Friends of El Salvador Committee do the work of identifying recipients for these gifts. Charities receiving money include the Association of Interfaith Ministries (AIM), Woodland Hospice, St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry, Marynoll Lay Missionaries, Central Michigan Chapter of the Red Cross, Next Step of West Michigan, Listening Ear and others. We have also supported the construction of a chapel in Miramar, El Salvador. The donation to Listening Ear supports the Adopt-a-Family program we funded last year. It has been a big success and Listening Ear is looking for more sponsors to expand the program this year.

Transitional Living Program

Erin Rubingh of Listening Ear wrote a letter thanking us for donating to the Transitional Living Program which helps pregnant/parenting youth.

Friends of El Salvador

The Friends of El Salvador Committee is continuing its activities to assist our needful friends in the rural Baja Lempa region of El Salvador, especially in our sister parish of Miramar.

Scholarships

We have once again provided 20 scholarships for students in the San Vicente region of El Salvador. Some of the program funding will be used to support field trips and allied activities that strengthen prospects students will be successful and stay in school through completion of high school. The scholarships

provide money for expenses not paid by government: school uniforms, supplies, transportation, etc.

Faith Weavers is a major contributor to the scholarship program, and we have assisted dozens of impressive young people over the years. Money to support these scholarships comes from several sources; donations from members of Faith Weavers of St. Mary, grants from the Faith Weavers Endowment Fund, and grants from St. Vincent DePaul Parish.

Relief for Hurricane Ida Victims

In November, El Salvador experienced extensive damage from heavy rains in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. The San Vicente area, where Miramar is located, along with other communities experienced loss of life along with extensive damages to crops, homes, roads, and bridges.

Faith Weavers responded to this natural disaster by financially supporting the efforts of the SHARE Foundation, our partnering organization in El Salvador, to provide relief to the victims of this storm. People in El Salvador are particularly vulnerable to this type of natural disaster because of the fragile nature of their infrastructure.

Infrastructure Project

A new project this year is directed toward aiding two rural Salvadoran communities, Planatar and Betania. We want to raise \$7,400 to pay for 37 latrines for these communities. This project will help people in these communities improve hygiene and their quality of life through building these sanitary outhouses. This project is a follow-up to our successful support for the building of 35 outhouses in the community of Milagro de Dios in 2007-8.

For this project we're soliciting the support and partnership of other Central Michigan Catholic parishes. We've already received a commitment of \$2,500 from Blessed Sacrament Parish in Midland, for which we're grateful.

Are you interested in participating in the Friends of El Salvador Committee? If so, contact Dave Dreyer (989-386-3693 or djddreyer@gmail.com) or Tom Moore (773-3250 or moore1tj@cmich.edu).

Haiti Earthquake Relief

We have sponsored restorative and continuing work at an orphanage north of Port au Prince through Matthew 25 Ministries, a charitable organization working in Haiti. Fr. Joe Fix, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Evart, recommended donating to Matthew 25 Ministries. Fr. Joe will be celebrating mass with Faith Weavers on April 11th. He has worked with Matthew 25 in supporting a sister parish in Haiti. We look forward to his report on reconstruction activities at our service in April.

In addition, we have set aside funds to sponsor a local doctor to travel to Haiti in the spring. More on this as plans evolve.

All organizations receiving funds from Faith Weavers are researched by the Service and Justice Committee. This review includes confirming 501(c)(3) status of the organization and reviewing its standings with Charity Navigator. For instance, Matthew 25 Ministries uses only 0.4 of 1% for administrative costs!

The committee welcomes suggestions from members of organizations in which they have personal interest and are worthy and eligible for donation.

Check the website in the future for links to sites where donations have been made by Faith Weavers.

Questions for Joe

Joe Frankenfield has offered to answer questions relating to current concerns you have about our faith. This is similar to the "Three Minute Teaching" we had at St. Mary's Parish. You can post a question to the Faith Weavers' listserv by sending an email message to FAITH@LS2.CMICH.EDU. You can also submit questions through a "Questions for Joe" box we will have at our monthly gatherings. Joe will post responses to these questions on our website. We hope that Joe's responses will stimulate other questions that can post to the listserv to keep the process going.

Please think about issues related to our faith that have raised questions in your mind. These questions may relate to: traditions of the faith like our devotions to Mary; changes taking place in the mass because of new

directives from Rome; or the Bishops' position on current social issues, like the debate over health care.

We are offering this "Questions for Joe" forum as a service to our community and to meet the needs of our members. Joe is willing to answer questions as long as they keep coming from the community.

Faith Weavers Website Upgrades

The Faith Weavers website has been revamped to provide more information about our activities and more convenience in accessing the information you want. The homepage of our site is updated weekly with a reprint of Joe Frankenfield's "Thoughts on the Second Readings," and the new navigation scheme provides an intuitive way to access what interests you. The website is where you can find current information on the Faith Weavers community activities.

The main navigation bar is organized by major activities of our community and provides drop-down menus for one-click access to the information you want.

Upcoming events are located under the Community navigation tab. A calendar has been added to show all of the activities sponsored by Faith Weavers. This calendar is a Google application that provides dates of general interest along with Faith Weavers scheduled activities.

The Book Study Group is also listed under the Community tab. Here you will find summaries of discussion on "Letters to Exodus Christians," our current book being read. The Reflection tab directs you to the Questions for Joe section and links to all of Joe Frankenfield's "Thoughts on the Second Readings."

There is a lot of other information about Faith Weavers on our website. Visit it soon at <http://www.faithweavers.org> and make it the place you go when you have questions about our community and its upcoming events.

Faith Weavers Financial Report

For the Year Ending December 31, 2009

Donations	\$39,622	100%
Expenses		
- Charitable Giving	\$30,182	76%
- Services	\$3,016	8%
- Administration	\$2,849	7%
Total Expenses	\$36,047	
Donations over Expenses	\$3,575	9%
Beginning Balance	\$12,762	
Ending Balance	\$16,337	

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. During 2009 we gave 76% of donations to others in our local, national, and international communities.

Your generosity continues to exceed our expectations and we ended the year with an increase of \$3,575 in our fund balance. We plan to use this money to support the many people who are experiencing economic hardship do to natural disasters and economic displacement. The service and justice committee is meeting to identify more charities to receive money from us. In our operating budget for 2010 we plan to reduce our cash balance for one year's worth of activities. It is a privilege to channel your generous support to the needy.

Because most of the work is done by volunteers, we have very low operating costs. Eight percent of donations were use to conduct the monthly prayer services and social gatherings. Seven percent covered administrative costs such as insurance premiums, and supplies.

Faith Weavers Endowment Fund

The Faith Weavers Endowment Fund has been active this year. The initial amount of \$181,277 received from the Diocese of Saginaw has been invested in mutual fund securities and the balance has grown to \$220,885 on December 31, 2009. The Board of Trustees has authorized grants of \$10,500 in December of 2008 and another \$9,000 in July of 2009. The total \$19,500 has been distributed to charitable organizations this year. Here is a financial report for the Endowment Fund for this year:

Faith Weavers Endowment Fund

Statement of Income and Expenditures

Contributions	\$ 50
Appreciation in Market Value	\$53,104
Dividends	\$6,003
Total Contributions, Appreciation and Dividends	\$59,157
Grants	\$19,500
Expenditures	\$49
Total Grants and Expenditures	\$19,549
Net Increase in Fund Balance	\$39,608
Beginning Fund Balance	\$181,277
Ending Fund Balance	\$220,885