

Faith Weavers of St. Mary

February 2016 Newsletter

www.faithweavers.org

Mission Statement

We are a faith community formed to support one another in working to build the kingdom of God through service to others in all aspects of our lives. We are committed to creating an environment open to new expressions of growth and maturity by expanding our vision of ourselves, our church, and our world, and through our commitment to social justice.

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Date	Time	Activity
February 14	4 pm	Prayer Service with Karon Latham
March 13	4 pm	Mass with Fr. Joe Fix
April 10	4 pm	Prayer service with Karen Latham
May 15	4 pm	Prayer service with Joe Frankenfield
June 12	4 pm	Mass with Fr. Jack Johnson
August 28	TBA	10 Year Anniversary Party

Upcoming Services

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 14, 2016, Karon Latham will celebrate a prayer service with us. Following mass we will have a pasta bar and chocolate desserts waiting for us. **All food will be provided.**

March 13, 2016, Fr. Joe Fix will celebrate mass with us. Irish stew and Shepherd's Pie will be prepared for our Irish celebration dinner. **Please bring a dish to pass.**

April 10, 2016, Karon Latham will celebrate a prayer service with us. We will have a ham and cheesy potato meal. **Please bring a dish to pass.**

May 15, 2016, Joe Frankenfield will lead us in a prayer service. We will honor mothers and graduates with a brunch following the prayer service. **Please bring a dish to pass.**

June 12, 2016, Fr. Jack Johnson will celebrate mass with us. We will recognize retirees and honor fathers at this service. Following mass we will have BBQ Spare Ribs and salads dinner. **Please bring a dish to pass.**

Please invite a friend to attend one of our services. A simple invitation may be a great gift to a friend.

Ten Year Anniversary Celebration Coming August 28th

It is hard to believe, but Faith Weavers will be celebrating its ten-year anniversary this August 28th. We will be celebrating with a party at Sleepy Hollow Hideaway. Mark your calendars so you don't miss the celebration. We will be sending out more information as we get closer to August

Faith Weavers Directory

We are in the planning stages to have a Faith Weavers directory. We hope the directory can be used to facilitate communication among our members. The directory will include pictures of individuals and families in our community along with contact information. It will help you put names and faces together when we meet to worship together, and recognize people we pray for when prayer requests are sent to the Faith Weavers email distribution list.

The directory will be in hardcopy-booklet format to avoid security issues with electronic lists.

We hope to have picture taking sessions this spring and have the directory completed by late summer or early fall.

Please send any suggestions or comments about this project to Dave Karmon at david.karmon@cmich.edu or 989-773-6335.

Charitable Contributions in 2015

In 2015 your generosity has supported grants of \$55,171 to local, national, and international charitable organizations. This money has come from your monthly donations and income from the Faith Weavers Endowment Fund.

\$23,689 (43%) of Faith Weavers grants went to local charities. They are: the Association of Interfaith Ministries (AIM), Christian Counseling Services, Christmas Outreach, Community Cancer Services of Isabella County, Connections that Count, Divine Mercy Center, Girls on the Run of Central Michigan, Mexican American Council, St. Vincent DePaul Parish, United Way of Isabella County, and the Women's Aid Services.

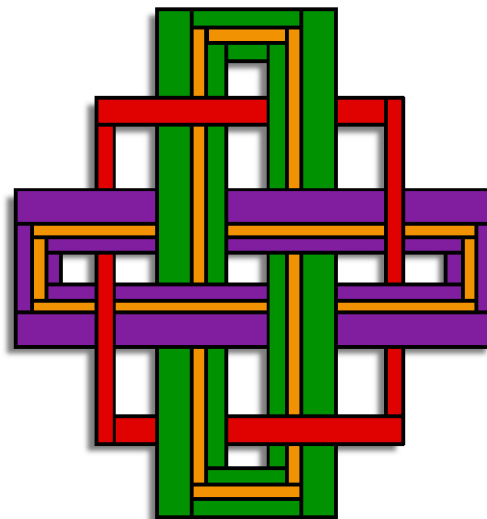
\$31,482 (57%) went to national and international charities such as the Alicia De La Cruz Fores Orphanage in Mexico, Catholic Relief Service, Doctors Without Borders, Global Compassion, HELPS International (Guatemala Stove Project), Hope for Haiti, and Wings of Mercy. Also included in these grants was \$14,582 to the people of El Salvador through the Friends of El Salvador Committee.

Many of these charities we have supported in the past and for some, we made first-time grants. Among the first-time grants were donations to Catholic Relief Services and Doctors Without Borders for aid to Syrian refugees. First-time grants were also given to the Christian Counseling Services, Connections that Count, Divine Mercy Center, and the United Way of Isabella County.

The Christian Counseling Services provides counseling and support for low-income clients in our area. Connections that Count, is a program offered through the College of Education and Human Services at Central Michigan University. It is run by Joan Hogan and enables area youth with disabilities to interact with CMU students and join in weekly recreational programming on campus.

The Divine Mercy Center is located in Southwestern Michigan, Clinton Township, and provides service to families in need. We supported their Kitchen Outreach Ministry. The grant to United Way of Isabella County supported the Adopt-A-Family program.

Do you know of an organization that would benefit from a grant? Please contact Karen Lee at grandmakaren68@gmail.com or call (989) 772-6349 on how the charity can request funds. Alternatively, visit our website at www.faithweavers.org and click the Community Outreach tab for a descriptions of the charities we have supported and information on how to submit a grant request.



Focus on the Steering Committee



Top row - left to right: Martha Jose, Sue Karmon, Morgan Monte, Karen Lee, Libby Clark, Pat Snett, Joan Hogan, Kathy Ling.

Bottom row - left to right: Mark Francek, Dave Karmon, Joshua Lukens.

Not pictured: Barb Frankenfield, Jane Leroux-Evans, Pam St. John, Rich Parr.

The Steering Committee coordinates the activities of Faith Weavers. The other Faith Weavers committees have representatives on the Steering Committee to provide a good channel of communication between the various Faith Weaver activities.

Members of the Steering Committee set the direction for Faith Weavers. They meet every other month to set priorities for how we actualize our mission statement. This is done through a planning process that includes setting our goals and financial budgets to achieve these goals. The Committee also keeps track of donations and expenses to provide financial information to members and governmental agencies.

Committee members also plan, organize, and carry out the monthly prayer services, Days of Reflection, and social gatherings. The social gatherings include the meals after the monthly services, the Tornado Picnic, and the August Party. Committee members work on reserving the space for all these activities, and get people to help work at these events. In short, committee members do what is necessary to carry out these activities.

The Committee always welcomes new members. To volunteer for the Steering Committee, or for additional information about it, please contact Dave Karmon at david.karmon@cmich.edu or (989)773-6335.

Memorial for Richard Parr



Richard "Weige" Parr (1943 to 2015)

We mourn the death of Rich Parr, a beloved member of our community. Shock, disbelief, and sorrow were the common reactions to word that Rich had died of complications from a heart condition.

In their eulogy at Rich's memorial service, his sons, Brian and Kevin, beautifully described Rich's life of service. "People Helping People" was Rich's rule-of-life, and he lived it in so many ways. One of the last examples of this was through his work for Christmas Outreach this past December. Rich and his long-time friend, Jim Hornak, co-chaired the project to get coats to distribute. They worked many hours to acquire, organize, and distribute the coats, and were successful at satisfying the needs of the people served by Christmas Outreach.

Rich and his wife, Donna, have been active members of the Faith Weavers community since its inception, and before that, part of our community at St. Mary's University Parish. As Karon Latham said at Rich's memorial service, he was someone you didn't forget. He was a presence in the group, friendly and interested in others.

He definitely was a presence in the Faith Weavers community, attending our monthly services and socializing with us during the meals that follow. He served on the Faith Weavers' Steering Committee and provided leadership in defining the direction for the group. It was Rich's idea to highlight families in our community through articles in our bi-annual newsletter.

We are grateful for knowing Rich, and will miss him in our community.

Christmas Outreach Success in 2015



Faith Weavers filling Christmas Outreach candy bags.

Christmas Outreach 2015 is now a memory, but a wonderful memory. Faith Weavers once again came through in a huge way to make the Christmas Stocking Project a huge success. We prepared and gave out about 1,000 stockings and gift bags through Christmas Outreach.

During recent years, we have noticed that more and more of the clients of Christmas Outreach are older, low income people, without children. We continue to serve about 450 children and 100 infants, but this year we decided to provide gift bags for the older adults. There have always been requests for hygiene products – bars of soap, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste and toothbrushes, etc. We combined these items with combs, pencils, pens, glue sticks, note pads, hand sanitizer, and a couple of “gifty,” but useful items – e.g., lint removers and flashlights (with batteries). We prepared about 400 of these gift bags, which were much appreciated. Donations were helped greatly by the Health Advocacy class at CMU, courtesy of one of our Faith Weavers.

In the past we have offered stockings only for children up to age 12. This year we also distributed stockings for teens. The Honors Program, the Circle K, Rotaract, and other student groups at CMU donated items they thought teens would like. The Honors College stands out year after year for its commitment of both money and time to this project.

But no group does more than Faith Weavers. You start in the summer buying back-to-school items on sale. My back room starts to fill up in July and, by the end of August, it is hard to see the floor. Then again in November and December, the items arrive in

quantity. This year, I ran out of room and Rowley Funeral Home provided a storage room which we filled. In addition to the items, you give a generous check to help buy items that we are unlikely to come through donations. Then you fill the bags of candy for distribution to every family. Finally, you show up in considerable numbers to help fill the stockings and distribute them. As I said in an earlier email, nearly all the persons helping with distribution this year were from Faith Weavers.

I focus my attention on the Christmas Stockings, but I know that Faith Weavers also supported Rich Parr and Jim Hornack in their coordination of winter coats this year. Oh, how Christmas Outreach will miss Rich, and mourns his passing, along with all of us. And you worked with other stations like children’s books, food, jeans, hats and mittens, etc., and served as escorts for the clients.



*Jim Hornak working at Christmas Outreach.
Photo taken by Kelly Rocheleau and published by
The Morning Sun. Used with permission.*

Thank you all and may God extend blessings to you in 2016. Since it is the Year of Mercy, I am sure you will all support us when we return asking for your help for Christmas Outreach 2016. In the meantime, may you have a peaceful and healthy and happy year. “Thank you” hardly says it, but know that you are deeply appreciated.

Eileen Jennings

Focus on Grant Recipients – the Mexican American Council



Mexican American Council after mass during a Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe

We like to focus on the work of organizations supported through grants from Faith Weavers. This article describes the work of the Mexican American Council located in Saginaw.

Fr. Joe Schabel, who celebrates mass with Faith Weavers a couple of times a year, is deeply involved with the Mexican American Council. Faith Weavers has made several grants to the Council, and Fr. Joe has expressed his gratitude for our support of programs offered by the Council.

The Council's mission is to assist people in crisis, and it does this through a network of programs designed to meet community needs. The Council has established a loan assistance program to help people in financial crisis. This program works with a local credit union to guarantee loans through the credit union. Individuals, who otherwise may not qualify for a loan, are able to get one because payments are guaranteed by the Council.

The Christmas Store is another program sponsored by the Council. The Store helps low-income families purchase necessities during the Christmas Season.

The Council was instrumental in establishing an After School Program for youths with a high risk of dropping out of school. This program provides students with help in doing their homework, snacks or small meals, and transportation to and from the program.

The Council has also worked to address problems within the community. They worked with the Saginaw Gang Taskforce to organize a Gang Summit. The Summit was designed to address the growing gang violence in the area. At this summit, gang leaders came together and created a truce. Violence in the city dramatically decreased after this meeting. The Council has worked to keep the senior center open at the Commission on Aging. This Center provided programs in Spanish and the staff had knowledge of the seniors' customs and culture.

The Council helps build community identity by sponsoring programs such as the Children's Art Program and Art Fiesta, helped decorate the city for the Holiday in the City Christmas lights, and hosts monthly masses and meals at the Mexican American Council Center.

Through all their activities the Mexican American Council weaves a web of social support for members of their community.

Isabella County Restoration Homeless Shelter Project

Again this year, Faith Weavers will provide an important service to our community by volunteering with the Isabella County Restoration Homeless Shelter project. This year we are partnering with Immanuel Lutheran Church during the two weeks beginning Sunday evening, February 7 through Sunday morning February 21.

Volunteers will be preparing food and serving meals, serving as evening greeters and hosts, covering overnight shifts and helping with morning clean-up.

The average number of clients at the shelter each evening has been between 16 and 18. Volunteers with ICRH have worked successfully with some clients to provide permanent housing.

This project provides a wonderful opportunity to truly "weave faith into life." If you want to learn more or find out how to help, please contact Kathy Ling at kling914@gmail.com.

Families in the Faith Weavers Community



Left to right: Bruce, Jeffrey, Martha, Ellen, Tim, Nhung.

The Gincer family consists of parents Bruce and Martha and three children. Tim, is the oldest and he is a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Room at Sheridan Hospital. He hopes to find a job and relocate to Chicago this year and join his girlfriend Nhung who is in her first year of Optometry School. Twins Jeffrey and Ellyn are currently both in college. Jeff is working on a degree in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) at CMU. In addition to taking classes, Jeff works at the Plant Engineering and Planning Department on campus which is providing him with excellent experience. He will graduate in December and says he would like to live in Seattle!! Ellyn graduated from Grand Valley State University in April and is working on a Master's Degree in International Human Rights at Goldsmith University in London. Ellyn also currently has an internship with Starfish Greathearts Foundation, an international development charity. She will graduate in October. Some of the family hope to visit her while she is there and see the sights of the city and surrounding areas.

Bruce and Martha moved to Mt. Pleasant in 1987 from the Thumb area of Michigan when Bruce took a job at Post Pharmacy. He began working as a staff pharmacist at KMart Pharmacy in 1993 and retired in September after 38 years of working in the field. Martha taught elementary education until 1999 when she began her current job of teaching Severely Emotionally Impaired students for the Gratiot-Isabella RESD. In their spare time they enjoy walking their dog Daisy, going to movies, and visiting with family and friends. They enjoy traveling when they can and look forward to more of that when Martha retires.

When thinking of “weaving faith into life” the beautiful tapestry that was given to St. Mary’s came to mind and all the love and talent that went into making it. The weaving of faith, love, time and talents into their lives is a focus of the Goncer family. Faith Weavers is such a blessing; the prayer, compassion and community it provides at each gathering carries through each and every day.

Faith Weavers Website Gets a Makeover

Our website, located at www.faithweavers.org, has received a complete makeover. The redesign is focused on making the website an informational hub for our community. You can visit the site to find information on the history and structure of Faith Weavers, charitable outreach, and upcoming events as well as news about the latest Faith Weavers’ activities. Pictures on the homepage link you to various locations on the website including reprints of Joe Frankenfield’s Thoughts on the Scripture Readings, food recipes for dishes you have enjoyed at our monthly gatherings, and much more. We have added a convenient way to donate to Faith Weavers through a PayPal service, and we are implementing a calendar of events, meetings, and other events in our area that may be of interest to you.

Faith Weaver member Nate Clark has made these changes to the website, and has enabled both mobile visitors and those using laptops or desktops a great experience when they visit the site.

The website has incorporated an easy way for you to make comments about what you view on the site and submit items you would like to add to the site. Your comments and submissions will be emailed to Dave Karmon and included in periodic updates as deemed appropriate.

Please take some time to visit the Faith Weavers’ website to see what it has to offer. We hope you use it as the place to keep up on Faith Weavers’ activities and events. We plan to frequently update the site with current information and add more items of interest to our group.

Post your comments and suggestions directly on the website itself, or send them to either Dave Karmon at david.karmon@cmich.edu or (989)773-6335 or Denny St. John at stjoh1d@cmich.edu.

Friends of El Salvador

The Friends of El Salvador fundraising campaign was again a success this year. We raised \$11,050, thereby exceeding our goal of \$10,000. Thank you for your generous support of our outreach to the rural people of El Salvador.

The money you donate goes to improving the lives of the Salvadorans by providing repairs and enhancements to the community infrastructure and supporting the education of youth. For example, in 2015 grants were given to the Guajoyo School to paint the school and to repair classrooms, roofs, ceiling and bathrooms and provide educational equipment and instructional materials for science and math education. We also provided funds for new costumes for a school folkloric dance troupe.



Residents of Miramar receive a shipment of rice and beans to supplement their food supplies after a poor harvest.



Students in the folkloric dance troupe at Guajoyo School perform in the costumes donated by Friends of El Salvador.

In 2016 we are looking forward to enhancing reading skills by providing Kindles for classroom use. Also this year we're considering funding furniture and equipment for the kindergarten as well as for improving physical education and recreation facilities.

Of course, we continue to support our sister community of Miramar. The rains this year washed out the crops for the residents of Miramar. We responded with a grant of \$2,440 to purchase rice and beans. We also plan to fund a street and path lighting project in Miramar to improve safety at night for the 36 families of the community. We're investigating the possibility of using solar power to reduce maintenance and on-going expenses.

As explained in past newsletters, we're winding down our support for the SHARE/CRIPDES Youth Program. We provided high school scholarship funds for this program for many years, but we believe our grants for education will be better used by supporting schools directly. We are honoring our commitment to students currently in the program by funding three students who are still working towards their diplomas. We also support a university student, a graduate of the high school program, who is working towards a degree in social work.

These are just a selection of projects in El Salvador that come from the generosity of Faith Weavers.

Join the Friends of El Salvador

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

Financial Review

Your donations to Faith Weavers supported grants of \$55,171 to charitable organizations. We received donations of \$47,514 and dividend income of \$6,810 from our Endowment Fund. Seven percent of our costs were for our monthly services and programs. Administration expenses were 6% of our costs.

The Endowment Fund's return of 0.4% reflected the low return rate in the overall market. We wanted to continue our historic level of giving from the Endowment Fund by making grants of \$20,400 this year. The combination of low portfolio returns and sustaining our level of giving resulted in a decrease of \$19,689 in our fund balance.

The Endowment Fund has a permanent fund balance of \$184,915 that represents donations that will remain in the fund to generate income. The non-permanent portion of \$41,468 represents the accumulation of income that is available to give out in grants.

Faith Weavers have a cash balance of \$35,417. This consists of \$21,476 reserved for the Friends of El Salvador and \$13,941 available for Faith Weavers activities. We like to maintain about \$13,000 in the unrestricted fund for Faith Weavers and our current cash balance is very close to this amount.

Faith Weavers of St Mary Statement of Financial Activity For the Year Ending December 31, 2015	Faith Weavers of St. Mary	Endowment Fund	Combined
Donations	\$47,514	\$300	\$47,814
Program Revenue	740		740
Dividends and Interest	<u>57</u>	<u>6,810</u>	<u>6,867</u>
Total	48,311	7,110	55,421
Expenditures			
Charitable Giving	34,771	20,400	55,171
Monthly Services	5,175		5,175
Programs	386		386
Administration	<u>3,852</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>3,892</u>
Total Expenses	<u>44,184</u>	<u>20,440</u>	<u>64,624</u>
Revenues over (under) expenditures	4,128	(13,330)	(9,203)
Inter-fund Transfers	2,300	(2,300)	
Increase (decrease) in Market Value		<u>(4,059)</u>	<u>(4,059)</u>
Increase (decrease) in fund balances	6,428	(19,689)	(13,262)
Beginning Fund Balance	<u>28,990</u>	<u>246,072</u>	<u>275,062</u>
Ending Fund Balance	<u>35,417</u>	<u>226,383</u>	<u>261,800</u>
Restricted and Unrestricted Fund Balance			
Reserve for Friends of El Salvador	21,476		21,476
Permanent Funds		184,915	184,915
Unrestricted Funds	13,941	41,468.	55,409
Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$35,417</u>	<u>\$226,383</u>	<u>\$261,800</u>