

Faith Weavers of St. Mary

Fall 2021 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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Faith Weavers during the Pandemic

Faith Weavers started the return to normal activities by having our Anniversary Party last August. It was so good to be together again with others in our community, and enjoy the delicious foods brought to our potluck. We have pictures from the party in this newsletter.

We had hoped to resume monthly prayer services this fall without social restrictions, but the Delta variant of Covid-19 changed these plans. We decided to hold the September prayer service with precautions to prevent any spread of the virus. Participants wore masks, and we did not have a meal after the service. We have scheduled masses for November and December, but plans may change if Covid cases increase in our area.

We are deciding on a month-to-month bases about having these services and what restrictions will be in place. Watch for updates on our email distribution list for the November and December services.

Committees have kept active this year. The Service and Justice Committee continues their work of identifying organizations to support and recommending amounts to give in grants. So far this year, we have given \$27,000 in grants and more grants are being considered by the committee. See the article in this newsletter for more details.

The Friends of El Salvador continue to support projects in El Salvador. Supporting the Guajoyo School and student scholarships is the primary focus this year. See more details in the article on the Friends of El Salvador in this newsletter.

Upcoming Services

Date	Time	Activity
Nov 14th	4 p.m.	Mass with Fr. Fred Thelen
Dec 12th	4 p.m.	Mass with Fr. Fred Kawka

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

November 14, 2021, Fr. Fred Thelen will preside at mass. At this service we will have our remembrance for passed loved ones. Bring your donations for Christmas Outreach to this service. **Please check emails from Faith Weavers for information about Covid-19 restrictions. We will tell you in these emails whether or not we will have a meal.**

December 12, 2021, Fr. Fred Kawka will celebrate mass with us. **Please check emails from Faith Weavers for information about Covid-19 restrictions. We will tell you in these emails whether or not we will have a meal.**

Invite a Friend to a Faith Weavers Service

Please invite a friend to attend one of our services. A simple invitation can be a wonderful gift to someone looking for a faith community, and ours is a great community to join.

The General Dance of Creation



“As members of the mystical body, Christians actually partake in the divine nature of the Trinity. We do not merely *watch* the dance, we *dance* the dance. We join with Christ and the Spirit flows through us and between us and our feet move always in the loving embrace of the Father. In that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, we see the joyful love of the Father through the eyes of the Son. And with each breath we breathe the Holy Spirit.”

(Carl McColman, *The Big Book of Christian Mysticism: The Essential Guide to Contemplative Spirituality* as printed in Richard Rohr, *The Divine Dance* p. 64, published by Whitaker House, New Kensington, Pennsylvania, 2016.)

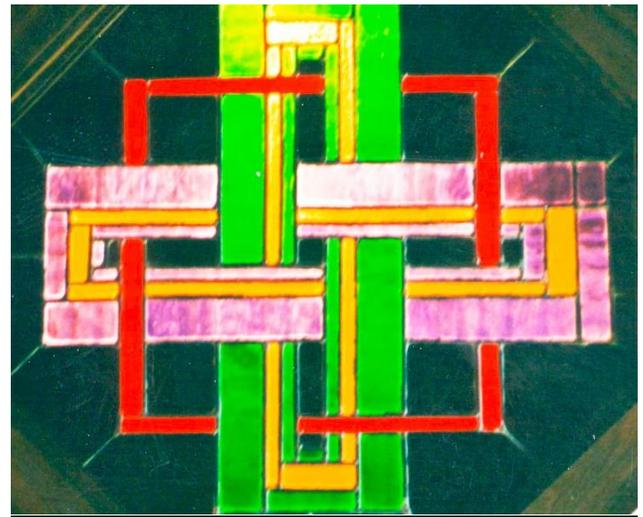
It is comforting to know, especially during these stressful times, that our God is a generous God. The quote from Carl McColman shows the Trinity as community, Father, Son, and Spirit, engaged in the flow of love. We are invited to join this cosmic dance, and in doing so, participate in this Love.

In times of stress, we may lose the beat of the Dance. Circling-the-wagons to protect what we have, seems to be a natural response when we are frightened and feel under attack. But, in the Dance our fear is replaced with trust. We view our gifts as God’s abundance to be shared with others. In

sharing we watch them multiply for those less fortunate.

There are many stressors in our lives: Covid-19, political unrest, social unrest, climate change to name a few. Addressing these issues may seem overwhelming to us as individuals, but as members of the Body of Christ we have a role to play. By giving what we can, we show faith that God will use what we offer to bring creation to fulfillment; by giving what we can, we express hope that our efforts are not be in vain, and we reflect God’s love to others.

So, don’t be a wallflower, timid and afraid; get on the dance floor and sway to God’s music.



15th Anniversary Party

Faith Weavers 15th Anniversary Party was held at Sleepy Hollow Hide-a-Way on August 15th. Again, this year, Jerry and Marilyn Morey offered their beautiful retreat for our party.

Friends gathered to enjoy a beautiful summer day with lively conversation, delicious food, and lots of laughter.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this event a wonderful success.



(Faith Weavers came together at our August party for the first time in a year and a half)



(Everyone participated in the feast of great dishes brought for our potluck meal)



(Joshua Lukens supervises the chefs, Jim Hornak and Terry Lerch)



(A warm summer day was enjoyed at the lovely Sleepy Hollow Hide-a-way)

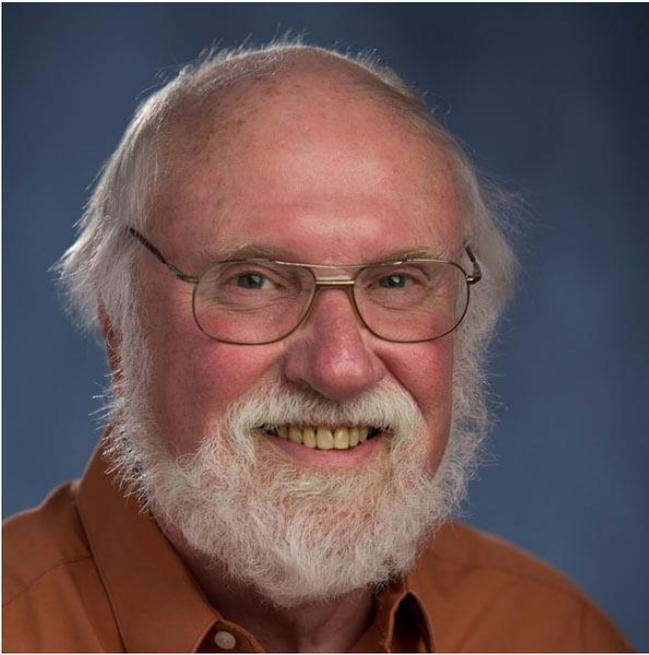


(Joe Frankenfield gives a prayer of thanksgiving to be able to gather once more, and a remembrance for those who are still suffering from the pandemic.)



(Sully, Laura, and Jillian pose for a picture)

In Memory of Fr. Joe Fix



Fr. Joe Fix

Last May Faith Weavers lost a dear friend and supporter with the passing of Fr. Joe Fix. Fr. Joe first said mass with us in March of 2010. Since then, he has been with us each March until 2019 when he became too weak to travel to Shepherd because of his cancer and lung disease.

Fr. Joe also conducted a 12-steps to Spirituality Retreat for Faith Weavers in November of 2011. This retreat was modeled after the 12-steps to sobriety used by Alcoholics Anonymous. It was warmly received by 35 members of the Faith Weavers community.

We were introduced to Fr. Joe through Martha Jose and Joanie Hogan. They attended mass at Fr. Joe's parish in Ewart, and were taken by his friendliness, humility, and message of social justice.

Fr. Joe stressed the need to end racism, sexism, violence, and greed. Many of our members were drawn to him because of his committed to these Christian values.

He was a "character" that reminded many of our beloved Fr. Jeff Donner. He will be deeply missed by all of us.

Hope for Haiti is an outreach of Fr. Joe's to Our Lady of Carmel parish in Haiti. Over the years Fr. Joe has fundraised to the support this parish and its school. Over the years Faith Weavers has contributed about \$20,000 to this outreach.

Fr. Joe established a Foundation to continue this support after his death. If you would like to send a donation to Hope for Haiti in memory of Fr. Joe, you can send a check to Hope for Haiti, C/O Sacred Heart Parish, P.O. Box 778, Ewart, MI 49631. Make your check payable to Hope for Haiti.

Charitable Contributions in 2021

The Service and Justice Committee continues their work of identifying organizations to receive Faith Weaver grants and recommending amounts to give to these groups. So far this year the committee has given \$27,000 in grants.

Annunciation House received a \$10,000 grant. This organization assists migrants at our Mexican border. The border crisis continued through the summer and into this fall. The committee felt a large grant was needed to help Annunciation House with their efforts to alleviate the suffering of people in distress at our southern border.

The Josefino Orphanage in Mexico was given a \$5,000 grant. This grant was used to buy clothes for the children at the orphanage. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the lives of the children and staff at the orphanage. During the pandemic children have stayed on the grounds of the orphanage, and they attend school virtually. This adds to the work of the sisters who now must help students with their online work along with caring for their physical, spiritual and emotional needs.

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) got a \$2,000 grant. This is a state-wide organization that works with community leaders to advance sexual health, identity, and rights for our youth. Their programs work with adolescents in five areas: accessing sexual health services, consent, and gender-based discrimination, expectant and parenting youth, sex education, and sexual orientation.

Grants were also distributed from the Faith Weavers Foundation. Recipients were: Christian Counseling of Mid-Michigan, \$2,000; Isabella County Restoration House, \$3,000; Isabella County Soup Kitchen, \$1,000; Midland CFOA and Rehab; \$1,000; Mexican American Council, \$1,000; Hope for Haiti, \$1,000; RISE Advocacy Inc. of Isabella County, \$500, and the Isabella Citizens for Health, \$500.

Do you know of an organization that would benefit from a grant? Please contact Karen Lee at grandmakaren68@gmail.com for information on how the charity can request funds. You can also visit our website at www.faithweavers.org and click on the Community Outreach tab for a description of the charities we have supported and information on how to submit a grant request.

Friends of El Salvador

With the completion of potable water projects in two communities early in the year, the Friends of El Salvador Committee has been focusing on grants for educational projects this year. Grants have been given to the Guajoyo School and for college student scholarships.

Guajoyo School Projects

Guajoyo School Principal, Iris Cañas, requested funds to renovate the kindergarten classroom, purchase new furniture for other classrooms, and initiate a student education fund. The renovation of the kindergarten classroom included replacing the ceiling, lighting, and furniture as well as adding a tile floor. This project is finished and cost about \$7,000.



(New floor for Guajoyo School kindergarten room)

Classrooms for grades 1-9 also got new furniture. Ceiling fans were installed in one of the buildings, and water coolers were purchased for each of the school buildings. The cost of these additions was approximately \$12,600.



(Classroom furniture arrives at Guajoyo School)

In Iris Cañas' report on the projects, she mentions that students are taking pride in these additions to their school. They say that they now have "a better school than private schools." Iris expresses her gratitude to Faith Weavers for making this possible.

Finally, the Friends of El Salvador Committee authorized a \$1,000 grant for a new student expense fund. This fund is intended to help students whose families have limited means to meet out-of-pocket educational costs and to address needs that threaten student school attendance. During the summer four students were each provided \$4.50 weekly for transportation to school, and food baskets were delivered to ten families with children described as at risk of malnutrition.

Scholarships

The Friends of El Salvador Committee continues to support school-related expenses for Heri Cruz, a resident of Miramar and student at the Lutheran University of El Salvador. He has a major in Social Work and has just begun an internship in a Migrant Assistance program operated by the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod. Heri is also a member of Miramar's Directiva, the leadership council. He is a good friend of some members of the Friends of El Salvador Committee, and it is a delight to see him mature and assume a leadership position within the Miramar community.



(Heri Cruz, far left, with other members of the Miramar Directiva)

We are also supporting two \$1,400, one-year college scholarships for the San Pedro Nonualco program of Project El Salvador. Project El Salvador funds and manages many high school and college scholarships in El Salvador. The San Pedro Nonualco program is run by Rolando Barillas, a Salvadoran and former U.S. Peace Corps staff member. Committee delegates met with in March 2020. Rolando establishes a mentoring relationship with the young scholars to encourage and help them complete their degrees.

For more information about the Friends of El Salvador, or to become part of the Committee, please contact Tom Moore (773-3250, moore1tj@cmich.edu).

Christmas Outreach

Article by Eileen Jennings and Jim Hornak

We will be holding Christmas Outreach at the Campus Life Building on High Street (the old Coca-Cola building). Stockings and gift bags will be filled on December 6 and 7 with distribution on December 9, 10, and 11. **We need volunteers for all these times.** Contact Eileen.jennings811@gmail.com to help with stocking stuffing and distribution. To volunteer for general distribution, use the Christmas Outreach Sign UP Genius. We will send the link later.

Eileen's big ask this year: **I need a co-chair** for Christmas stockings and gift bags. If you would like to

become more involved with Christmas Outreach, please contact me and talk about how you can help.

We plan to give out about 300 children's stockings, 60 infant stockings, 100 pre-school stockings, 200 teen gift bags, and 300 adult gift bags. We need items for 100 teen boys, as well as children and adults. We have some items for teen girls, so we don't need many more.

Along with the stocking stuffers, please give us any **calendars** you receive in the mail that you will not use. These continue to be very popular. Both wall calendars and pocket calendars are needed.

Also, the need for winter coats is greater than ever. New and gently used coats are needed for girls and boys, women and men. There is a special need for boys, plus, big, and tall sizes. Snow pants are also needed for girls and boys. New coats can be purchased online or at local stores such as Walmart, Sam's, Kohl's, Target, or Meijer's. As in the past, gently used clean coats and snow pants are appreciated too.

In addition to stockings/gift bags and winter coats, Christmas Outreach will give out boots, hats and gloves, linens (sheets, blankets, towels), children's books, and Christmas decorations. Karon Latham is the chair of the Christmas decorations.

Bring your donations to the Faith Weavers' November 14 service. Also, all items can be brought to the Campus Life Building on Monday, December 6, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Tuesday, December 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, we need the items for stockings no later than Monday morning. If you drop off items on December 6 or 7, please bring only clean items on this list that are in good shape or new.

Jim Hornak will pick up coats, if you are unable to drop off your donation at either Faith Weavers or Campus Life. Please contact Jim, at 989-560-2443 to make arrangements for pick up. Also, if you cannot get your items for stockings and gift bags to either place, Eileen Jennings will accept them at her house, 1323 S. Watson, Mt. Pleasant.

Thank you for all the ways you step up for Christmas Outreach. You truly do Weave Faith into Life.