

Faith Weavers

of St. Mary

Fall 2023 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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Upcoming Services

Date	Time	Activity
Oct 8th	4 p.m.	Prayer service with Karon Latham
Nov 12th	4 p.m.	Prayer service with Joe Frankenfield
Dec 10th	4 p.m.	Mass with Fr. Fred Kawka

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

October 8, 2023, Karon Latham will lead our prayer service. A meal of soups and salads will await us following the service. **Please bring your favorite salad to add to our menu.**

November 12, 2023, Joe Frankenfield will preside at this prayer service. At this service we will have our remembrance for deceased loved ones. Following this service, we will have our Traditional Thanksgiving dinner. **Please bring a dish to pass.** Bring Christmas Outreach donations to this service.

December 10, 2023, Fr. Fred Kawka will celebrate mass with us. Following mass, we will have a roast beef and roast pork dinner. **Please bring a dish to pass.** Donations to Christmas Outreach can be brought to this service too.

17th Anniversary Party

Faith Weavers 17th Anniversary Party was held at Sleepy Hollow Hideaway on September 10th. After seventeen years our community bonds have strengthened and matured.

This event is our welcome back from the summer and the start of our monthly gatherings for the fall and winter. Everyone enjoyed lively conversation, delicious food, and lots of laughter.



(Jim Hornak and Bill Courtright cook hotdogs and hamburgers to perfection)

In Memoriam

In Memory of Nancy Nerbonne

Article by Mike Nerbonne



(Nancy Nerbonne)

Nancy Nerbonne passed away in early June after a long struggle with ocular melanoma. From the early 1980's Nancy, along with husband Mike and their four children, were members of St. Mary's University Parish and the Faith Weavers.

She made significant contributions to her faith community, especially through her involvement with the Friends of El Salvador Committee. This included a memorable trip to the village of Miramar. While there she discussed ongoing and future projects that the Faith Weavers supported. She enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Miramar while staying with host families in the village.



(A new tradition started. Gathering around the big rock for friendly conversation.)



(Good friends and delicious food shared at table)

Nancy was a lifelong educator in Idaho and Michigan for 30+ years. She taught for several years at Sacred Heart, followed by the Mt Pleasant Public Schools. Nancy loved spending time out-of-doors, camping, hiking, skiing, and spending time at the family cottage on Platte Lake.

Nancy was a kind and thoughtful person. She lived a life of giving to others, raising her children, and teaching her students to value generosity, kindness, and above all, love. She will be greatly missed by her family, friends, and the Faith Weavers community.

Charitable Giving in 2023

So far this year Faith Weavers has given \$52,155 in charitable outreach. Of this amount the Friends of El Salvador Committee has distributed \$20,150 for projects in El Salvador (see the related article in this newsletter on the Friends of El Salvador Committee). The Service and Justice Committee has distributed \$27,500 in grants to charitable organizations; \$1,800 has been given to St. Vincent DePaul Parish, and the remaining \$2,705 was given to charitable organizations to honor the priests who preside at Faith Weavers monthly gatherings.

The Service and Justice Committee continues to do an outstanding job of identifying organizations to receive our charitable grants. Two organizations were given first-time grants. St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church was given \$2,500 to support the people of Ukraine (see related article in this newsletter), and \$3,000 was given to the Laman Afghan Foundation to give aid to the people of Afghanistan.

Grant to organizations supported in the past:

- A grant of \$6,000 was given to Global Compassion for construct of latrines and classroom furniture upgrades at the Azohoue-Cada School in Benin Africa.
- A \$2,500 grant to the Care Store to provide personal care and household products to local people in need.
- Connections that Count was given a grant for \$2,000 to support their programs for people in our community.
- World Kitchen was given a \$2,000 grant to help people suffering from natural disasters.

- Wings of Mercy given \$2,000 to provide flights for people who must travel to receive special medical care.
- The Josefino Orphanage in Mexico was given a \$3,500 grant. This grant was used for mattress pads, bedding, and towels for the children at the orphanage.
- Clothing Inc was given a grant for \$4,000 for clothing items for men in our community.

Spotlight on Ukraine Outreach

(article by Fr. Roman Fedchyk and Kim Summers)

Glory be to Jesus Christ! Everyone here, at St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church, is very grateful for support from Faith Weavers. We appreciate your prayers and financial assistance. The \$2,500 grant was applied toward necessary purchases, such as medical supplies and the recent acquisition of an Italian ambulance vehicle. This vehicle serves as an ambulance for injured civilians and soldiers.



(Ambulance purchased to provide medical assistance)

The invasion on February 24, 2022, generated shock and painful emotions as video emerged from family, friends, and news media. Parishioners arrived at St. Michael's that Thursday for a special service as Fr. Roman led them in prayer. Fundraising activities are constantly pursued as churches, homes, hospitals, and schools continue to be destroyed. The need for food, clothing, water, medicine, and money persists and we appreciate your generous donation.

"We are asking each of you to pray, and to pray that our families are looked over by God," Fr.

Roman said to the parishioners on that fateful February night. Please continue to pray – for family and friends sheltering in Ukraine and in foreign lands, and for those who have lost loved ones during this war.

St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church is in Grand Rapids.



(Fr. Roman of St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church in Grand Rapids)

Friends of El Salvador

At the winter meeting of the Friends of El Salvador Committee we evaluated project proposals and determined funding allocations. Since then, the primary activity has been closely monitoring funded projects. We are also working with our Salvadoran partners to identify needs and develop proposals for 2024.

For 2023 the total funding provided to beneficiaries is \$20,150. This money has been spent on the following projects.

Guajoyo School Projects

There were four school projects funded and completed this year. The unusable school kitchen has been beautifully renovated. It is used to prepare and distribute the daily meal nutritionally essential for many of the children. The quality and diversity of meals are being reinforced by a special “student meals” fund provided by the Friends of El Salvador Committee. This grant supplements the very small allocation of school dollars available for meals.



(Before and after photos of the renovated kitchen)

In one of the school buildings the crumbling walk and entrance, as well as the corridor and classroom floors, have been replaced after years of increasing damage from tree roots. The floors now have attractive tilework. Several trees have been removed. Smaller trees have been planted to create an attractive landscape with less potential to damage the floor as they grow.



(Repaired entranceway at Guajoyo School)

Funding from the Committee has made possible recent purchases of a video projector, three LCD screens, and internet upgrades to support student learning. These purchases are part of a decade-long initiative by the school and the Committee to ensure a steady pace of technological development beyond the level possible in many Salvadoran schools. New musical instruments have also been added to bolster arts education.



(Students at Guajoyo School practicing with new instruments purchased by the Friends of El Salvador)

Iris Cañas, School Director, stated recently that a visiting delegation from Spain was highly impressed and said so: they “never imagined seeing a Salvadoran rural school” making such excellent advances.” Iris thanks Faith Weavers—yet again—for the on-going support for improving learning and student satisfaction at the Guajoyo School.

The Community of Miramar

Heri Cruz, our scholarship student in Miramar, reports that thirteen families are participating in the Poultry Project. In the first phase of the project, the community benefited from the good production of eggs and meat for family consumption. Also, newly hatched birds were available for sale. This initial phase of the project has concluded. A second phase is envisioned to engage additional families in systematic poultry production.

In recent weeks communication from Miramar has increasingly expressed alarm about the condition of many of the community’s older latrines and the emerging threat posed to hygiene. Some are badly eroded and unusable, and most families cannot afford

to build new ones. Community leaders are surveying needs and developing a request for funding that will be evaluated by the Committee. The Friends of El Salvador last funded latrines for Miramar in spring 2018, when sixteen were built.

A couple weeks ago Heri passed along, once again, the community’s deep and on-going gratitude for the support by Faith Weavers and the Cebelak Foundation of the water well (2019) and water tank (2020). He said the security of potable water access has been an immeasurably valuable gift to the community.

College Scholarships

Three university students are being funded through a grant by the Committee to the scholarship program in San Pedro Nonualco. Two students attend private universities in the capital of San Salvador. They receive a stipend of \$150 a month during the academic year for their expenses, including travel from San Pedro. The third student attends a public university online and receives \$75 a month for expenses.



(San Pedro students on a field trip)

This year the program has ten university students and six high school students who aspire to college study. All students are required to attend monthly meetings, participate in the program’s field trips and book discussions, and maintain good academic progress.

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).

Restoration House Dinners

Article by Sue Karmon

Again, this year Faith Weavers will be teaming up with Immanuel Lutheran Church to provide dinners for guests who stay at the Immanuel Lutheran. We are to provide a dinner for three nights. The main dish is set, but we need desserts, a vegetable casserole, rolls and salads to feed 30 guests.

If you can help, please contact Sue at susan.karmon@chartermi.net or 989-773-6335. If you need help in paying for the food you make, we can help with that.

The dates are October 29 to November 4, and again from February 4 to February 11.

Thank you for helping those less fortunate.

Christmas Outreach

Article by Eileen Jennings and Jim Hornak

Christmas Outreach has a lot of changes this year, but our mission and the way we will fulfill it is the same.

Our location will change. The Campus Life people are doing renovations in December and their building is not available. After a long search, **Morey Courts** stepped forward and offered their facility. However, to use their location, we are having Christmas Outreach later this year. We will be distributing on **December 15 and 16**.

We have Morey Courts only from December 13 through December 16, so our schedule is consolidated. We move in on December 13 and organize that afternoon and on Thursday, December 14. Please mark your calendars so you can help us on these two days. We will let you know just when we need help for filling stockings once we know.

Coats and Snow Pants

Again this year, we will need winter coats and snow pants for our guests. Faith Weavers members have generously contributed many new and gently used coats in past years. I encourage you to check your closets for gently used coats to donate. You can also buy a coat or two at Merchandise Mart, B2, Burlington or some other store.

As always, he needs more of the very large men's and women's plus and big/tall sizes. They cannot be too big.

Other Gift Items Needed

We need new and gently used bedding (queen size is the most in demand) and towels. We need boots in adult sizes.

I am in the process of transferring direction of the children's stockings to Sharon Wegner. She is making some healthy changes but keeping to the original intent of the stockings and gift bags.

Once again, we need your help with stocking stuffers. When so many of us had young children, we tried to focus our request on items children could buy for children. Now that we have fewer young children in our membership, I hope you will support our request for more teen and adult items. We are also trying to ask certain groups for particular items to better meet the participants' needs.

We are asking this year for adult toothpaste. We get small toothpaste for the kids and teens from local dentists, but we like to give a full-size tube to our adult guests. We are also asking for men's and women's shampoo/conditioner. Sometimes the men's is also a body wash.

Finally, we are asking for sippy cups. We provide these for very young children up to school age. We are hoping to get about 25 of each of these items from Faith Weavers. Of course, we welcome other items. For example, I know that several of you have purchased the back to school supplies we put in the children's stockings, and we still need them. We still want small stuffed animals to use as "toppers" for stockings. Beanie Babies work well for this if you have a collection to give away. Also, if there is some item you particularly want to donate, we welcome it. Feel free to talk with me if you have questions.

We continue to accept hotel- guest- size toiletries and we want your calendars. Do not buy the calendars. Just give us the ones you receive in the mail that you will not be using. They remain amazingly popular with our guests.

If you have purchased the items, you can bring them to our November 12 Faith Weavers meeting. Since we are so late in distributing items this year, you can also bring them to our December 10 meeting.

You can contact Jim Hornak at 989-560-2443 to arrange for Jim to pick up your donation of coats or snow pants.

Faith Weavers is the backbone of Christmas Outreach. Your volunteerism is essential to our success. Last year, everywhere we looked, we saw Faith Weavers helping. Thank you in advance for your work and leadership in this enterprise that is so important to families in need at Christmas time.

Changes in the Faith Weavers Choir

We have a new choir director and a new pianist in our choir. Gerri Clark, a long-time member of the choir, has agreed to assume the choir director's position, and Whitney Crooks, a returning member to the choir, will be our new pianist.

Introduction article by Gerri Clark



(Gerri Clark)

I am Geralyn Marie Clark (Go by Gerri). I have two sons in their 20s that are both single, so no grandbabies yet.

I grew up in the Detroit area and got my Masters in Speech Language Pathology from University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 1983. I chose speech language pathology because of my love for singing. My first choir experience was singing Handel's Messiah at U of M.

I work at Altercare Rehabilitation and Nursing Center of Big Rapids. During my varied SLP experiences I have generally preferred helping adults get off or avoid feeding tubes, and I greatly enjoy helping those with Parkinson's Disease strengthen their weak voices.

I have returned to finish the Lay Ecclesial Ministry formation program in Saginaw Diocese to better serve the Faith Weavers and St Vincent de Paul's faith communities.

I am pleased to have been asked to be your new music director and eager to serve you in this role.

Introduction article by Whitney Crook



(Whitney and Chris with Ivan, Reagan and Nolan)

Not everyone gets to say, they love their job, but I am one of the few. As music Director for Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Ionia, Michigan, I get the honor of sharing mass with my community and making music at the same time.

One day a week I teach music to our school kids, and I am the semi-permanent PE teacher. In my spare time -- oh what free time -- I am raising three kids. Reagan is 7, Nolan is 5 and Ivan is 3. They are exhausting but wonderful!

My husband, Christopher, is the produce manager at the Ionia Meijer. I graduated from CMU with a Music Ed degree in 2008 and hope to get a Masters in Liturgical Music someday.

Faith Weavers Website



Our Faith Weavers website has a lot of information that can be helpful to you. The main menu options, About Us and Community Outreach explains who we are and what we do.

The About Us Tab contains information on our mission and goals, the history of how we were formed, and the committee structure we used to operate as a faith community. There is also information on our legal status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and financial information about donations and expenses.

The Community Outreach tab describes our charitable outreach. It provides information on the type of

organization we fund and the process of applying for a grant.

The picture links provide additional information on our activities. For example, the Reflection link has Joe Frankenfield's weekly gospel thoughts, and the upcoming events has the schedule for our monthly gatherings.

Please visit our website at www.faithweavers.org to see what it has to offer.