

The N.E.W. Koinonia News

Winter 2021

Core Committee

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Victor Schiszik

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Philippians 4:6: Have no anxiety at all, but in everything by prayer and petition, With thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.

Dear Koinonia Family,

Having a thankful heart can change your entire perspective and outlook on life. One of the best ways to experience the power of thanksgiving is through prayer, a lesson I “relearn” again and again. The struggles of the past several months – sickness, isolation, etc., have had a profound effect on our Koinonia retreat efforts. But, as in all things, by giving these situations over to God in prayers of gratitude, our focus shifts from our problems to our blessings. And that’s the beauty of faith – we can experience gratitude and give thanks despite the circumstances and storms that surround us. This quote from John F. Kennedy resonates deeply with me: *“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”*

How richly blessed we are to have spent an awesome and incredible weekend at Holy Family in September. As I recall past retreats, I thankfully remember the number of individuals we have welcomed into the Koinonia family, supported by those who willingly give their time and talents to serve, and all of those who hold retreat teams in prayer. How beautifully YOU reflect the true

meaning of Community through your involvement in Koinonia. I am blessed to be in your presence.

While your Core Committee has begun the process of planning for 2022, much is still undecided. By the first of the year, our goal is to have full weekend retreats scheduled and confirmed along with two Saturday retreats. The question is: can we sustain the precious gift of sharing the Pascal Mystery with others through Koinonia? I do not have the answer – **because the answer is within each of you!** Retreats, either full weekends or single days, don’t just happen. The logistics of each event requires planning – and someone to do that planning with support from Core. I invite you to think about, and pray about, your interest in/commitment to the continuance of NEW Koinonia. Without you, and all Koinonians, moving forward to keeping the program alive and well cannot be successful.

I offer you the opportunity to pray with me the following written by Kelly Barbrey: “Dear heavenly Father, please help me to accept both life’s little challenges and Your restoring help with grace and gratitude. Help me remember that no problem is too large or too small for me to call out to You. Please help me remember that a heart can be filled with joy in every day, not just the easy days. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Bluette

Community Room

Spiritual Directors Message

Dear Candidates & Team,

NEW Koinonia is up and running and it is a huge blessing.

New and old friends came together for a glorious weekend of fellowship and faith. Holy Family parish was a great host and it was the perfect location to continue to grow our faith. Our new Koinonians were able to feel safe to express their joys and struggles in life. What an exciting time to be a member of this beautiful community after experiencing this very successful weekend. It was wonderful to join together for the glory of God! We were provided with reason to believe and hope that we can continue to grow this community/family, Christ is counting on YOU!

Sending love and big hugs,

Fr. Jerry Hagen, Spiritual Director



Missy Wiener, Assistant Spiritual Director

Lay Directors Message

How blessed we are to come together after so many months to provide our beloved Koinonia retreat experience at Holy Family parish.

Although many days has passed since we were together to celebrate the Pascal Mystery, the power of the Holy Spirit and the changes made in us during these days remain with us as we continue to deepen our commitment to follow Christ. The hours of preparation weeks before the event, the fascination of watching friendships develop/relationships strengthened, the opportunity to experience walking with those who feel lost either physically, emotionally, or spiritually and by the time we said our goodbyes on Sunday afternoon many of the "lost" had been found aka healed – daily, sometimes hourly, miracles prevail. It is truly Divine Intervention when 50 strangers find it hard to part ways!

Blessings were showed upon us by Fr. Jerry's spiritual direction and Missy's meaningful prayer services. Music lead by Annamarie, Roni and Andrea enriched our worship, as did table leaders Lynn, Bill, Margie, and Ellen who shared their meditations and life experiences. Our faithful Gophers

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Sharon and Mike kept us on track and met our every need – powerful contributions to a successful retreat. We are privileged to have shared this deeply spiritual weekend with all of you.

To Jane and the kitchen crew, and to each Wheatie for your dedication and prayers – we offer prayers of thanksgiving for your presence in our lives and are grateful to call you our sisters and brothers in Christ.

We joyfully welcome Linda Ewert, Bill & Patricia Heil, Denise Lutz, Diana Maki, Carol Moore, and Leanna Samardich into the Koinonia Family and look forward to your participation in a future retreat. We hold you firmly in our prayers until we meet again.

Community Room Lay Directors

Bluette Puchner & Kathy Rominske



Community Room: Linda Ewert, Bill Heil, Patricia Heil, Tammy Holman, Denise Lutz, Diana Maki, Carol Moore, Andrea Nelsen, Leanna Samardich, Bluette Puchner, Kathy Rominske, Fr. Jerry Hagen, Melissa Wiener, Mike Novak, Sharon Voldberg, Andrea Bleck, Annamarie Novak, Roni Tobias, William Polacek, Margie Novak, Roni Tobias, William Polacek, Margie Novak, Ellen Rogers, Lynn Neeck



Wheat Team: Deacon Jeff Austin, Rita Austin, Maureen Knetter, Victor Schiszik, Jane Schiszik, Lyn Van DeVoort, Diane Morey, Lori Hoogland, Mary Hackel, Marie A. Korinek Hencsik, Michelle Socha, Michele Stewart

- The Wheat Team -

This Koinonia weekend was a busy one, but a blessed one for the Wheat Team. Just before the weekend started, we lost many of our team due to illness and unexpected home situations. Yet, we chose the theme for our part of the weekend to be "Treasure Seeking Wheaties." We would seek Jesus in Community and service to His people.

No one Wheatie did just one thing in the Wheat room. All of us went from one job to another: from praying, to working and helping one another with laughter and listening, giving

support and sharing stories. All the Wheaties were busy all the time. We had kitchen duty which included peeling potatoes, washing dishes, cooking, setting and cleaning tables. This was a first for the Wheat Team ... everyone in the kitchen working ... as well as still doing all the other things needed to serve the Community Room.

The song we chose for the weekend was the cry of our hearts throughout the weekend and into the future – *Lead Me, Lord*. We were led by God to do what we did not think we would be able to do ... and we kept working and laughing with one another. We

helped each other when we were not totally sure of things and often felt overwhelmed. Yet, God did lead us and continues to lead us. We shared laughter and fun with the "Casting Lots" game show. From those who were Wheaties previously, to those who were new Wheaties – we were all stretched beyond ourselves and into a stronger sense of relationship with Jesus and each other. This was and is the blessing of Koinonia.

Deacon Jeff & Rita Austin

Wheat Team Lay Directors



Greetings from the Wheat Team Spiritual Director

Being called to serve as the Assistant Spiritual Director for the Wheat Team for the Koinonia Retreat #57 at Holy Family Parish, Woodruff was a first-time experience for me. However, before the retreat even started, a phone call informed me that Father was ill and could not attend. I now was the Spiritual Director-with no Assistant.

True to form what the Koinonia Family does, both Wheat Team and Community Room members pitched in to help set up the Wheat Chapel;

some moved furniture, some brought in chairs and the banners from previous retreats, some found items in the tote boxes. When Sunday afternoon came for "tear-down", once again members pitched in to help.

Jesus is present with us in the Blessed Sacrament in the Wheat chapel. We have our own mini retreat, praying and singing in praise of our Redeemer. We pray for the candidates, we pray for and over the members giving a meditation, and we pray individually for our own special needs. To serve where one is asked is what the community of Christ is all

about. Many times, during the weekend we stop in the middle of the task we are working at to come together and pray-talking and listening to God.

I was humbled and honored to serve as Wheat Team Spiritual Director. If you are asked to serve in this position at a future retreat pray, "Jesus I trust in you" and just say "yes"!

Your Koinonia Sister in Christ,

Maureen Knetter





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