



Best of luck on Regents exams and midterms! High School (grades 9 & 10) and Mid-Level (grades 6, 7, & 8) resume on Monday, January 28 and Tuesday, January 29. Please note these sessions are for youth only with a start time of 7 pm. *This is a change from the original schedule mailed home this summer.*



Attention **6th grade youth!** Join us for a special retreat on Saturday, February 2, 2019 1:30-4:30 pm (mass with your family to follow) Look for a separate mailing!

Opportunities for Teens!

The following are chances for teens to participate in a variety of experiences to live a fuller life in the faith. They will meet other teens, and spend valuable time learning about who they are meant to become. Our Lady of the Assumption has a policy of asking families to pay only 1/3 of the total costs of these events, the other 2/3 coming from the parish and from the various Youth Ministry fundraising activities that take place all year long. No teen will be turned away for an inability to pay. There are also scholarship monies available. Please read through these carefully with your teen, check out the websites where available and pray on it. Deadlines are fast approaching, so please let Mrs. Gavin know if you are interested. 785-1605 or youthola@nycap.rr.com.

Journey Retreat (for youth in grades 10-12, or recent grads) March 21-24, 2019

Held at the Dominican Retreat Center, in Niskayuna, NY, candidates arrive by 6 pm on Thursday and the retreat concludes with a Mass on Sunday evening. If you are interested in exploring your faith, and learning something about yourself then Journey is right for you! The Journey Retreat is for young people who are looking for something more in their lives. It is time away to reflect on how a young person can live as a leader in his or her different community. We will be talking about things which are important to young people. It is an experience which is different for each person.
February 14 deadline to contact Mrs. Gavin.

NCYC (National Catholic Youth Conference) (for youth 16-18 years old) Sunday, November 21-23, 2019

NCYC is an exciting, biennial four-day experience of prayer, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. The schedule includes general sessions and workshops addressing a wide variety of topics as well as opportunities for reconciliation, daily liturgy, and special activities such as concerts, a dance and comedy club. The thematic park is a unique venue incorporating traditional exhibits with interactive educational and recreational activities. This year's theme is "Blessed, Broken, Given."
NCYC is held in Indianapolis, Indiana and more than 25,000 attendees are expected to participate.
If you are interested in attending, please contact Mrs. Gavin. Planning and fundraising starts soon!

Our Lady of the Assumption
Faith Formation and Youth Ministry
498 Watervliet-Shaker Road
Latham, NY 12110
(518) 785-1605

Winter 2019
Volume 4, Issue 2

Living in Faith

A Newsletter from the Faith Formation and Youth Ministry Office

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR:

Dear Parents and Families,

Greetings to all in the New Year. I wish you every happiness, good health and many blessings in 2019. Right now I am looking out at a gray sky and a few snowflakes whirling around in the wind. The weather spotters are predicting a big storm for Martin Luther King weekend. We'll wait and see!

However, Spring is just around the corner and soon the Shaker Lacrosse teams will be practicing on the parking lot. The days will grow longer and the sun stronger to melt away the cold. We have a very busy semester ahead of us and I am excited for all of our candidates who are preparing to receive sacraments.

Second graders will celebrate First Reconciliation on Sunday, January 27th. A simple celebration that teaches them about the love God has for each of us even if we make a few mistakes along the way. They will celebrate First Eucharist and receive the Body and Blood of the Lord on Saturday, May 11th.

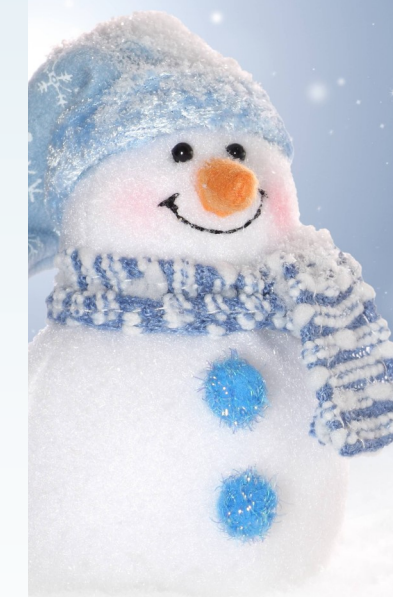
Fourth graders will share in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday, March 16th. They are learning about personal responsibility, love of neighbor and the power of forgiveness. When we open ourselves up to the mercy of God, wonderful things happen.

High School sophomores will begin their preparation for Confirmation in February. Pray for them as they mature in the gift of faith and fulfill the promises made for them at baptism. Confirmation is the final sacrament of initiation. May the Holy Spirit fill them with wisdom and understanding. Confirmation will be celebrated on Sunday, May 5th.

At Easter we will baptize one adult and receive two candidates in the Rites of Christian Initiation. Please pray for these wonderful people who are so excited to learn about our Catholic faith.

We also have new babies to baptize during the Easter season and a couple of weddings too. Lots going on! We look forward to all of these celebrations with your families and friends. We are grateful to you for your faithful support and the example you show to your children and youth.

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord let his love shine upon you and bring you peace,
Fr. Burke



God has the power to forgive.

Inside this issue

Friendship Luncheon.....	2
Lenten Living.....	2
Lenten Living (Continued).....	3
Faith Formation Staff.....	3
Souper Bowl of Caring.....	3
Journey Retreat.....	4
NCYC.....	4

Dates to remember!

- 6th grade retreat Feb 2
- Souper Bowl of Caring Feb 2-3
- Friendship Luncheon Feb 9
- Journey Retreat March 21-24
- NCYC November 21-23



Seniors (55-er's) invited!

**Youth Ministry's
Annual
Friendship Luncheon**

Saturday, February 9th
from 12 noon –2 pm
Presented FREE to our
senior parishioners,
family and friends by the
junior high youth here at
OLA. Join us for a
delicious lunch and lots
of fun! Invite your friends
and reserve a table if you
like. Please sign up in the
Gathering Space starting
January 27th.

**Any junior high youth
(6th, 7th or 8th grader)
interested in being a
server at this luncheon
should email Mrs. Gavin
youthola@nycap.rr.com.**

She will pass your
contact information on
to the youth coordinating
this event.

Lenten Living

Didn't we just finish our Christmas Celebration? Now you want us to worry about our plans for Lent?!

It's like the Valentines and Easter candy already on the shelf. Whether or not we are ready to buy it, it's there. God is present everyday, whether we are ready or not, listening or not, looking or not, praying or not. He is patiently waiting for us. On March 6, we mark the beginning of Lent with Ash Wednesday. For the next 40 days we prepare for Easter and the greatest gift we have ever been given, Jesus's death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. It's really a 40-day challenge that is to Christian life what spring training is to baseball. It's time to go beyond believing in God, to actively placing God in the forefront.

So how do we do that? Between work, school, homework, practice, lessons, dance, rehearsals, games, going to mass, and faith formation, when and where do we find that time? Is it about finding the time or MAKING the time? I switched some feature on my smartphone on that tells me how much screen time I've used each week. Yikes! There's the time. If I just put down my phone I could certainly fit a quick prayer in.

Church tradition recommends three types of spiritual exercises for us during Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Let's see if we can give you some new ideas to jump start your Lenten days.

Fasting: "So what are you giving up for Lent?" - about as Catholic as it gets, right? It's really about denying ourselves something good to make room for something better. We create more space in our hearts for God. What if your family gives up something together? You can hold each other accountable. Maybe it's screen time. Is there more room for silence in your life? It's hard to hear God through all the noise in our lives.

Prayer: Can you fill that quiet with prayer? Even if it's just a few minutes everyday. Maybe your family has a favorite prayer you could say each day, just before dinner, or bed? Each Friday in Lent, the Stations of the Cross are recited at 12 noon in the church, followed by a simple soup lunch. There is no school on Friday, March 22. Imagine how surprised Father Burke would be to see our children with us at Stations! (And the soup is homemade by different parishioners each week.)

Almsgiving: We often get stuck here on the idea of giving money. Living paycheck to paycheck makes that extra money hard to find. Money alone cannot relieve the deepest suffering. What if we focus on the people who need the money. Let's grow in compassion towards those in need. Could I buy just one more box of pasta or can of soup in the next grocery run? Bring those things to Faith Formation sessions on Sunday mornings. We'll get it to our local food pantries. Is there a way your family could spend an

Lenten Living (continued from page 2)

afternoon volunteering at a Food Bank or shelter? Can we challenge our children to look for the student in need? Maybe it's not food they need, maybe it's a friend. Do we notice the person sitting alone? We are all so busy that sometimes these people go unnoticed. Reach out with a smile or greeting. It is a powerful act of courage and love to reach out and befriend someone.

So let's go back to my phone...if I give up screen time, I've checked one box (*fasting*), and if I pray while I'm *not* on my phone, box two checked (*prayer*) and imagine if I use some of that time to pray with a new friend? (*almsgiving*)

Here are a few other opportunities right here at OLA: Rice Bowls (Catholic Relief Services uses these funds to help people all over the world.) Why not place it in a spot where you throw your extra change now (*my car console, for example*)? Look for OLA Lenten programs currently in the works (check the Bulletin or website www.olalatham.org) and stop by the Stations of the Cross if you can run out at lunchtime.

This won't help with cutting your screen time, but the MyParish App offers Lenten Reflections if you're sitting in your car waiting for a kiddo to come out of practice. The MyParish App is available on the App store and is FREE!



I hope to see you at mass on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil.

Blessings to you and your family,

Kristi Pegarella

**God has the
power to provide.**



As football fans prepare for the "Big Game", OLA Youth Ministry is holding their annual "Souper Bowl of Caring" spare change collection after all masses February 2nd & 3rd.

We also welcome new socks for men and women as we "SOCK IT TO HUNGER"! This year's proceeds will go to the Sr. Maureen Joyce Center soup kitchen/Catholic Charities Tri-County Services. The socks will go to Joseph House in Troy. Thank YOU!

Faith Formation Staff:

Mrs. Linda Berkery serves as the Pastoral Associate for Adult Faith Formation responsible for the RCIA process and adult spirituality. Her email is lberkola@nycap.rr.com.

Mrs. Rosemary Gavin serves as the Pastoral Associate for Youth Faith Formation responsible for Junior High and High School Faith Formation (Gr. 7-11), sacramental preparation for Confirmation, and the dozens of other youth opportunities here at OLA. Her email is youthola@nycap.rr.com.

Mrs. Felicia Hunter serves as the Administrative Assistant for Faith Formation and Youth Ministry. Her email is fmhola@nycap.rr.com.

Mrs. Kristi Pegarella serves as the Pastoral Associate for Elementary Faith Formation. Her primary responsibility is the Elementary Faith Formation Program (Gr. 1-6) and sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Eucharist. She works with the website and other new technology the church is exploring. Her email is kbpola@nycap.rr.com.

Our offices are open 9am-4pm, Monday-Wednesday and Friday. Call us at 518-785-1605.



**Ash Wednesday
Mass Times
9 am and 5:30 pm
12 noon (ashes only)**