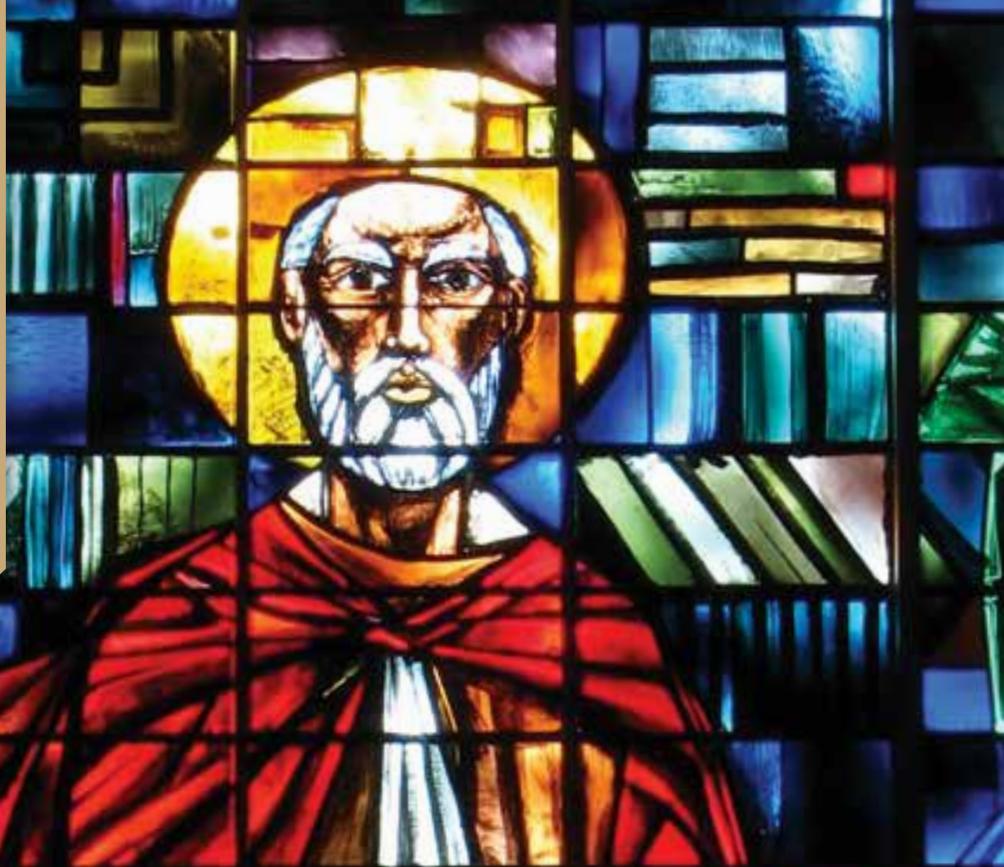


Church of St. Peter, Quincy III

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE

A Beloved Parish Tradition and a Chance to Give Back

When the aroma of fresh cinnamon rolls wafts into the sanctuary during Masses on Dec. 8 and 9, you'll know that Mary Brahler is baking the rolls and that the Christmas Cookie Sale is awaiting you downstairs in the social hall.

The Social Concerns Committee will be prepared to welcome you after all the weekend Masses. You can choose from a variety of beautifully decorated Christmas cookies to take home. While you're there at the sale, for a free-will donation, you can relax with a hot cup of coffee and a freshly baked cinnamon roll. It's all a wonderful St. Peter Parish tradition that embodies the Christmas spirit.

"Our parishioners are asked to bring in cookies, and we get lots, all varieties, for the sale," says Sharon Mays, committee Chair. "We have about 50 to 75 people who do cookies. Certain people bring their specialties. One parishioner, Mary Talken, always brings cakes and they go up for sale. Another



er parishioner, a professional baker, brings boxes of sugar cookies. We get fig bars, shortbread. The cookies are \$5 per pound. The parishioners are really generous in supporting us. We always have so many cookies and they are usually gone by the end of the day on Sunday."

Those wishing to donate cookies may bring them to the church on Dec. 8 and the morning of Dec. 9.

The sale is one way the committee raises funds for the financial assistance they provide through the year to various social service agencies, such

as Catholic Charities, the United Way Unmet Needs Committee and the Horizons Soup Kitchen.

"A lot of times people will come to the door of St. Peter and ask for help," Sharon says. "There are also individuals at St. Peter who might need financial help. So the cookie sale is vital to help us make the goal we have to help people."

There is no projected financial goal for the sale.

"We just want to offset our donations through

continued on back cover

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Let Us Find the Many Opportunities Share and Encounter Christ this Season

We all know classic stories of Christmas spirit instilling new life and bringing about a deeper sense of joy and gratitude — Dr. Seuss' Grinch, whose heart grows three times its size; or Buddy the elf, who brings Christmas cheer by singing loud for all to hear; or even the cold and greedy Ebenezer Scrooge, who awoke on Christmas morning a changed man, sharing in joy and treating all with kindness. We enjoy certainly hearing these stories every year. But sometimes, even as Christians, it is so easy to forget the source of these lessons — the birth of Christ, the first Christmas itself. And there are so many characters from this ancient story that remind us how to embrace this season as Catholic stewards.

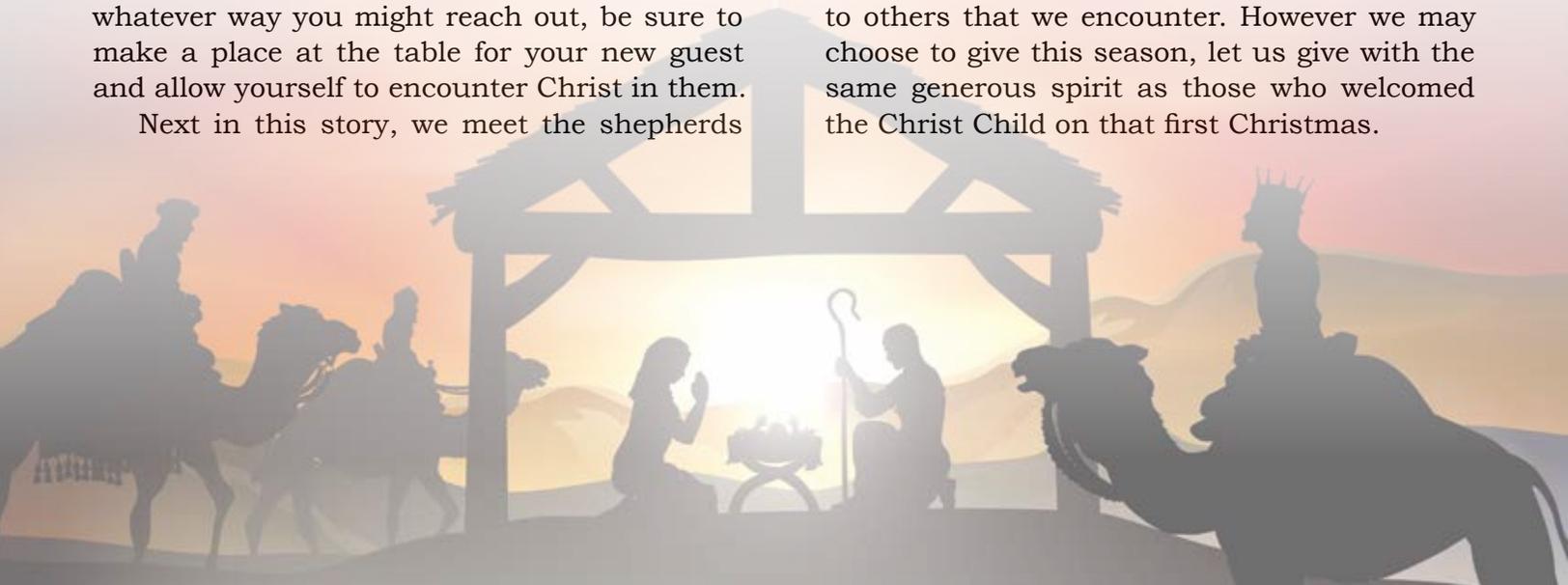
Let's start with the innkeeper, the first character Mary and Joseph encounter before Jesus even enters the world. He does what he can — there is no room, just a stable. He has little, but what little he has he gives away freely. And unknowingly, the Christ Child enters into this world in the midst of one man's humble offering. What a beautiful example of stewardship! Is there some small thing into which you could invite Jesus? Perhaps there is a new parishioner you could invite over for dinner, or a new mom for whom you could prepare a meal. In whatever way you might reach out, be sure to make a place at the table for your new guest and allow yourself to encounter Christ in them.

Next in this story, we meet the shepherds

— the first people to meet Jesus, to see their Savior face to face. Even in their poverty, they simply bring Jesus their very selves, this gift of their presence and eagerness to encounter Him. Consider visiting a nursing home to be with those who might not have company during this Christmas season. Or have a neighbor over who you haven't seen in a while. Sometimes, we forget that just taking time to be present to another person can be a gift of self.

And then there are the Wise Men. Though they are better off perhaps than the shepherds or the innkeeper with their offerings, they still chose to give their very best gifts, not out of excess or what was left over. Though such finery would not usually be seen in Bethlehem, the Wise Men went out from the comfort of their homes to encounter the newborn King. Consider starting a coat or sock drive in your parish to give to those in need in the community. Spend time serving in the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Go where the giving is not glamorous.

No one of these characters is better than the other — in fact, without even one, the story of the birth of Christ would not be the same at all. In turn, we all have something to offer, a way that we can allow the Lord to enter into our lives during this season, or to bring Him to others that we encounter. However we may choose to give this season, let us give with the same generous spirit as those who welcomed the Christ Child on that first Christmas.



A Letter from Our Pastor

STEWARDSHIP POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS AT CHRISTMAS

Dear Parishioners,

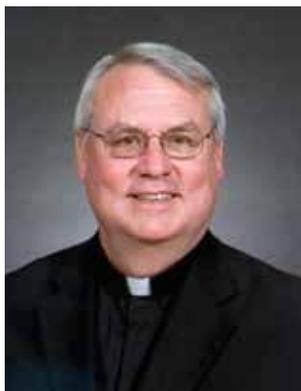
When I think of December, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. While that may seem to be the obvious topic, there really are a number of other possibilities. I could think of *Advent*, a season of preparation. I could think of the *Immaculate Conception*, as we celebrate God's gift to the world in Mary. I could think of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. Of course, December also holds the first day of *winter*. And because December marks the end of the civil year, I might be developing my resolutions for the New Year!

But instead, I think about Christmas. It is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Babe in the manger in Bethlehem, who is the eternal Son of God made man.

The basic truth of Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate — is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled such an additional load onto our Christmas observance that worship may be lost in the shuffle.

Think about what weight Christmas has to bear. We have to put up the decorations, or make travel plans to visit relatives. There is also the Christmas dinner to plan and cook. And then, we still have Christmas presents to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Yet, we still have a wonderful opportunity this season — an opportunity to combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments. Treasure, although challenging, is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus, Whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body, the Church, continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.



Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and prayer? Maybe you can attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Have your family gather for prayers together in the morning or at dinner, in preparation for Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

And there are so many opportunities to share our Talent! Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is shut-in. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless.

With a little planning, we can make this hectic time one of real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a merry Christmas!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow
Pastor



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. PETER USHERS SEEK TO SERVE ALL T

They're some of the first faces you see when you pass through the church doors on a Sunday. Their smiles and assistance give you a feeling of warmth and welcome, as you enter St. Peter's to gather with your brothers and sisters for Mass. Although their presence isn't often 'front and center,' their service is an important one, of humble hospitality. Seeking to serve every person they encounter, as if it were Christ Himself, they are our ushers.

"A good usher is someone who is super friendly, someone who is willing to hold a door open even if they're busy, willing to go out of their way to make something a little nicer for you," says parishioner Chris Gill, who coordinates the usher training. "[Ushers] are people who don't mind doing the little extra things, so people can have a good experience at Mass."

Every week, our ushers work diligently to create an environment that invites both

parishioners and visitors in our community to participate in our celebration of the liturgy. From greeting people and guiding them to their seats, to facilitating the collection, the ushers are busy before Mass begins. Starting with turning the lights on and answering questions before the Liturgy, ushers also stay after Mass to ensure that the church is orderly and prepared for the next Mass, with pews tidied and books put neatly away.

"We make sure things are going smoothly," Chris says. "We take care of the logistical stuff, so the priest doesn't have to worry about it."

Our ushers work hard to make everyone who enters our church feels welcome, safe and comfortable. Their service allows for those attending Mass to be able to enter more fully into Mass.

"I want people to feel comfortable and be able to concentrate on the Mass," Chris says. "Our job is to not draw attention to ourselves, but to



Our ushers' service allows for those attending Mass to be able to enter more fully into the liturgy.



Our ushers serve to help people have a good experience of prayer at Mass.

THROUGH HOSPITALITY AND ASSISTANCE

draw attention to the priest and to the sacrifice of the Mass so people can have the best experience possible, encountering Jesus Christ. We hope that they don't have to worry about the little things, and can just sit down and pray."

Parishioner Jeff Stupavsky has served as an usher at St. Peter's for nearly three decades.

"There's always someone who needs assistance, and we're always there," he says. "If folks come in and they've got four kids and they're looking for a place to sit, we've already got a spot picked out. I know where I can put the lady with a walker. It takes the pressure off of them, so once they get settled in, they can concentrate more."

For many who serve in this way, not only is it a way to give back to the parish, but it also helps the ushers grow in their appreciation of the community.

"I like to see the behind-the-scenes work

"I like to see the behind-the-scenes work of Mass. It gives me a better understanding of what it takes to put a church together — it's not just one person, it's a whole community. There's just so many people helping out, and you get to see all that behind the scenes, as an usher. It's neat to see all of that happening." — Chris Gill

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Chris encourages others to consider serving in this way, reminding that it's open to both male and female parishioners.

"If you're looking to get involved without a huge time commitment, why not join our team?" Chris says. "You're going to go to Mass anyway, all we ask is you come 10 minutes before Mass, and stay five minutes after Mass. It's simple and it's very gratifying, when people smile at you, when Mass is over, to know, 'Hey, I helped with that.'"

If you would like more information on how you can become involved serving our parish as an usher, please contact Chris Gill at cgill@culver.edu or 217-228-3278. Completion of the Protecting God's Children course, as well as a short, one-time training is required for those who would like to serve our parish as ushers.



From welcoming people to tidying pews, our ushers help to ensure that everything goes smoothly before, during and after Mass.

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

RECOGNIZING THE SEASON OF ADVENT, *We Can Create Faithful and Loving Traditions*

As the season of Christmas approaches, it is all too easy to get swept up in the frantic commercialism that tells us that Christmas is already happening — from now up until the 25th, and not a day more. To combat this misguided understanding, and to embrace what this time of year truly means, we might consider how to enter into the sacred quiet and careful preparation of the Advent season with our families.

Starting new Advent-centered traditions within our homes is a simple way to differentiate between the two seasons and embrace the grace that comes with this season of preparation. While hanging up the stockings, consider hanging up a stocking for Jesus. Family members can place their “gifts” for Jesus there. These can be sacrifices like giving up desserts during the week or committing to doing one extra chore for another family member. Advent can be as much of a time for fasting and almsgiving as the season of Lent — after all, both seasons are preparing our hearts for a great feast of the Church.

A similar activity is to create a manger bed for Jesus. For every good deed that a family member does, have them place a little straw

in a small manger in a prominent place in the house. By Christmas, there will be a fluffy bed in which the Christ Child can be placed.

If your parish has an angel tree or participates in a gift outreach, be sure that the whole family is included in the shopping by making it a family outing, or make a card for the child together. It’s easy to see those activities as a quick good deed, but anything that helps emphasize that there is another person on the receiving end helps to make the act much more meaningful.

While there are lots of activities that can help to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas, nothing centers us securely in this season of Advent quite like participating in the liturgy already prepared for us. As you are able, go to any penance services or live nativities, or take part in service opportunities on offer in our parish. Spend some time with your kids in the adoration chapel or in front of the Blessed Sacrament, reminding them that the Christ Who dwells there in the monstrance is the same Christ Who came to this world as a tiny baby — for it will be there in the presence of Christ that we can truly sing, with hearts ready to receive Him, “Oh come let us adore Him, oh come let us adore Him.”

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR’S MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve:
4 p.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m.

Christmas Day:
8 a.m., 10 a.m.

New Year’s Eve:
5 p.m.

New Year’s Day:
8 a.m., 10 a.m.



CHORALE PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

It's hard to imagine Christmas without music. Songs too numerous to name bring back heartfelt memories and help our souls express what words cannot at this joyous time of year. At St. Peter, parishioners and guests have so much to look forward to not only at Christmas but throughout the year, thanks to our Chorale.

The St. Peter Chorale has been a choir for nearly 30 years. Singing together in four-part harmony, the members bring their talents to the liturgy each Sunday at the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

"We started in 1992 and some of those people have been with us since we started," says Director of Music Ministries Monica Scholz. "Our job as Music Ministry is to help people to pray. We offer sung prayer for the benefit of the congregation."

With Christmas on the horizon, Monica says the Chorale looks for ways to encourage the congregation to join them in expressing the joy of the season through song.

"We don't sing carols all through Advent, so we sing carols at the Christmas Masses," she says. "We don't do a big cantata. I've found that people, after waiting patiently through Advent to sing those carols, they love that. At Christmastime, you don't want to take a bunch of music away from the congregation and carols are something that get everybody involved."

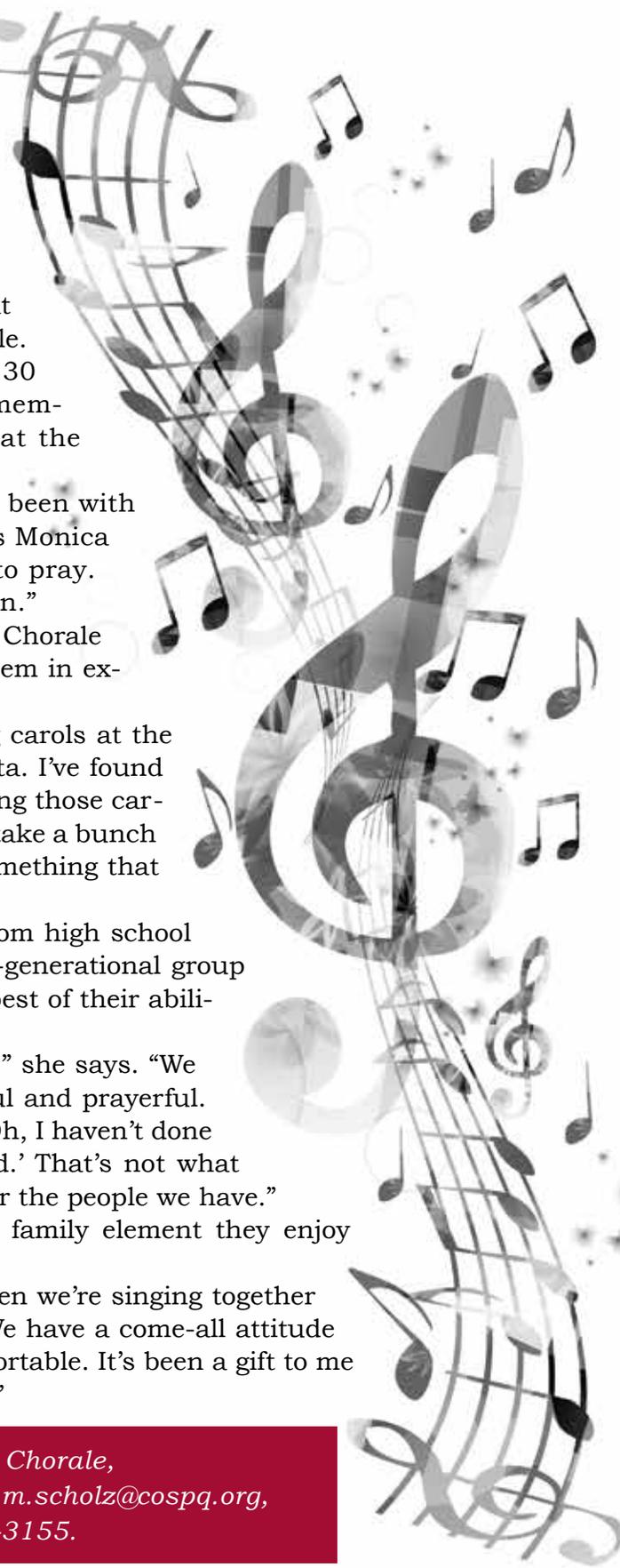
Chorale currently consists of about 35 members, from high school students to senior citizens. Anthems provide the multi-generational group of singers with the chance to blend their voices to the best of their abilities and Monica says new faces are always welcome.

"Our ministry is that we're there to serve the parish," she says. "We want them to know that what we're doing is meaningful and prayerful. We're always looking for new people and people think, 'Oh, I haven't done choir since high school' or 'I'm afraid of how I'll sound.' That's not what we're about. We welcome people and we're so grateful for the people we have."

Monica says what makes the group special is the family element they enjoy through fellowship during rehearsals and gatherings.

"It's a community, especially during the holidays when we're singing together and we're spending a lot of time together," she says. "We have a come-all attitude and we want people to participate however they're comfortable. It's been a gift to me and I think the people in the choir would say the same."

If you would like more information on Chorale, please contact Monica Scholz at 217-214-0131 or m.scholz@cospq.org, or call the parish office at 217-222-3155.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

2600 Maine Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301



Return Service Requested

MASS & RECONCILIATION SCHEDULE

Sunday Masses

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.,

Sunday: 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Weekday Masses

Mon-Sat: 8:00 a.m., except for

Wednesdays: 8:30 a.m.

Reconciliation

Saturday: 7:30-7:50 a.m.,

3:30-4:30 p.m. or by appointment

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALE *continued from front cover*

the year,” Sharon says. “We always appreciate donated cookies — they make the sale and makes it all happen!”

The Christmas Cookie Sale is held the same weekend that we can bring in our gifts purchased for the Giving Wreath. The gifts are specific items that are distributed to the needy through local social service agencies.

The Christmas Cookie Sale has a long, treasured history at St. Peter.

“It’s evolved from a few paper plates of chocolate chip cookies sold outside the church after Mass to beautifully decorated Christmas cookies,” says Judy Nelson, long-time committee member. “People who don’t like to bake or don’t have time are able to come and select cookies. It’s a great tradition

now in the parish with people really looking forward to it.”

Besides helping the committee raise needed funds, the Christmas Cookie Sale also provides a fellowship opportunity that we have come to anticipate for the holidays.

Although there are no cookies involved, the Social Concerns Committee has another fundraiser that usually occurs four times a year — the Fifth Sunday Collection.

“We ask for donations in a basket, either cash or change, for the baskets that volunteers hold at the end of Mass,” Sharon says. “We do it four times a year and it is the only way we solicit funds. So the Cookie Sale is a big part of the Social Concerns Committee request for help so we can do what we do.”

Anyone with questions about the Cookie Sale may call Sharon Mays at 217-224-5169.