



Unity Acres

315-298-6215

P.O. Box 153, Orwell, NY 13426
www.unityacres.org

January 1, 2017

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

It is approximately 6 pm New Year's Day. We have just come back from the Dining Room after enjoying another delicious meal prepared for us by our gifted kitchen crew, and after a special Brunch today noting the 80th Birthday of our Joe Hayes. To mark this auspicious occasion, we were served Eggs Benedict with cheese sauce and French Toast with Blueberry Sauce, although we were informed that they were Eggs Florentine as they included spinach. Joe's cake was on display (a perfect replica of the abominable snow man in the Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer TV Special that we all enjoyed for the umpteenth time earlier this month). The cake was served with supper at five: too bad to cut it.

I should back up to November when on the 24th we gathered in our Sacred Heart Chapel to give thanks for this home for so many men who would otherwise be homeless. *"Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom His world rejoices"*. With this old Hymn, we opened our Mass on Thanksgiving morning and do in fact thank God for so many wondrous things that have been bestowed on us. After our beautiful Thanksgiving Mass we head over to the Dining Room with tables so nicely decorated by Billy with a Prayer of Thanksgiving centerpiece card on every table. The Turkey Dinner with all the trimmings is one fit for a king. We are blessed.

Three days later, the Altar Cloth is changed to the purple trimmed one and the first of the Advent Wreath candles is lit marking the coming light in a time of darkness. The words of the Prophet Isaiah remind us of those spoken many centuries before the coming of Christ. *The Mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills....He shall judge between the nations and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another nor shall they train for war again.* What a pity this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

John the Baptist preaches repentance and Isaiah speaks again *A voice of one crying out in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.* We sing during Advent *Let the Valleys be raised and the mountains made low, every meadow and field overturn, make the pathway straight and the highways run smooth for the coming of God in our day,* and each week another candle is lighted until that day a month later when He that has been awaited is come!

The four advent candles are then lit along with a white one in the middle. Poinsettias surround the Manger scene in front of the main altar and we sing out *O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, o come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem—Adeste Fideles*. Mary Agnes leads us in this traditional song on Christmas Morning as we contemplate the significance of this most Holy Day in our Church calendar and in our lives. We remember during this beautiful Mass, the many, many Christmases past when we were surrounded by parents, children, family, and give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the gift of His Son who comes as a little baby to this earth to bring us forgiveness and salvation from our sins. Tears form during *Silent Night*, the Communion Meditation, *sleep in heavenly peace* and we remember so many gone before us who now sleep in heavenly peace. After Father imparts the Blessing and *Go the Mass has ended* and *Merry Christmas to all*, we sing the joy filled *Joy to the World, the Lord has come!*

But I fast forwarded to December 25 but there are many happenings in between Thanksgiving and Christmas and into today. On Saturday, December 3, we were treated to a wonderful chili supper by the Confirmation Class of Holy Trinity Parish in Fulton. These beautiful young people along with their catechists and helpers came in the afternoon and prepared and served us a lovely supper of great chili (their catechist Heidi from Germany tells us its “German Chili”!) along with tossed salad, Christmas Cookies and soda. The same parish brought a truck load of donations Christmas Week.

On Thursday, December 15, we again were feted by another parish and this time the same folks who have been doing it for 40 some years, Christ Our Light in Pulaski. We were treated once again to a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings along with roast beef and the meal topped with hot fudge sundaes and Christmas Cookies made by the children of the Parish! The down side of this wonderful annual gala was that there were blizzard like conditions that day and our dear friends from Christ Our Light who usually are here helping with the set up and serving and then sitting down with us for fellowship. We missed these folks but thoroughly enjoyed the wonderful dinner that they provided.

During the next two weeks, vehicles are pulling in with goodies of all kinds. Some stop at the kitchen with boxes of groceries, including turkeys and hams, others need to back up to the “Bricks” to unload the wrapped gifts for the men that have been prepared by folks from the various parishes and organizations who are so generous to Unity Acres and to the men at Christmas time. I could name some but many come in without leaving a name and so I won’t attempt to list all these good people. They know and God knows of their generosity.

On Christmas Eve we arrive in the dining room to witness a scene that is right out of a Fairy Land setting. The beautifully decorated tree in the center of the room is surrounded with colorful gift bags filled with gifts for each man and a side table holds wrapped gifts, one for each man. The tables with their red, green, blue, silver and gold coverings also hold a candy treat for everyone and after Father Jones leads us in a prayer of thanksgiving, we sit down to our Annual Christmas Eve Pasta Supper with banana cream pie made by one of our kitchen staff. After supper each man is individually called up, wished a Merry Christmas, and presented with his gifts.

Just days before Christmas we received word that BERNARD QUACKENBUSH had passed away. Bernie was, as we say, an old-timer, his association with Father McVey and Unity Acres going back to the mid-1970s. He settled in the local area in the early 2000s, first in Sandy Creek, and finally in the Springbrook Apartments in Pulaski in 2011. We used to hear from Bernie from time to time, and whenever we conversed, he would re-affirm his desire to be buried at the Unity Acres cemetery. We will honor Bernie’s request in the spring, and ask that you pray for the happy repose of his soul.

In the Chapel, tall vigil candles are lit in every window as a sign showing the way for the Holy Family as they travel toward Bethlehem. Christmas morning we welcome this family as we gather for our Christmas Mass and after Mass continue over to the dining room for a beautiful turkey dinner again

with **all** the trimmings and home-made pies for dessert. On each table, there is a small Christmas stocking filled with candy, made available to us by another generous donor.

The week continues with little surprises at our place settings certainly proving the twelve days of Christmas. New Year's Eve brings another meal that you couldn't top if you were in the finest restaurant and again prepared by our very talented kitchen crew. At each table again another bag of goodies presented by a wonderful group from Oswego. These decorated bags were filled with candy, cookies, and bags of hot chocolate mix, soup mixes, etc., etc. For years the men received such gift bags from two wonderful folks, Sue & Barney. Barney passed on a year ago and Sue is no longer able but is with us in spirit, wishing she was still out & about in her "smile face" van.

And now we are back to New Year's Day where I began this epistle. One of the men presented us with a card with the three Magi on front and the words *Peace, Joy and Love* and inside the card is his message "*Thank-you so much for helping to make my first Christmas here such a memorable one. I will never forget it.*" He followed with a smile face and "*Thank you again*" and signed his name.

The Feast of Epiphany is coming up in a few days at which we will listen to the rich words of Scriptures *Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come* from the prophet Malachi and from Isaiah we hear *Rise up in splendor Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines and over you appears his glory.* And that's it folks isn't it. All of our celebrations, and even all of our sad days of sickness or loss of dear ones, upon all of these, the Lord shines because our Heavenly Father sent his only begotten son to be born in a humble setting in Bethlehem two thousand plus years ago and we follow that Jesus, the light of which Isaiah speaks, the bright star led those three wise men all those years ago to our Savior.

From all of us here at Unity Acres, we send our appreciation to all who have supported us through all these years and have given our men *a Christmas they will not forget* and we wish you a Blessed New Year of Good Health and Happiness. Thank-you.

Peg McCarthy

To All Our Friends:

“Rejoice in the Lord Always”!

*Your kindness helped us to help others to give a blessed
Christmas to the men.*

In appreciation, we dedicate this blessing to you:

*“The Lord bless you and keep you! The
Lord let His face shine upon you, and be
gracious to you! The Lord look upon you
kindly, and give you peace!”*

(Numbers 6:7-21 From Feast of Solemnity of Mary - January 1, 2017)

*Thank-you & God Bless You,
Father Jones*