



Unity Acres

315-298-6215

P.O. Box 153, Orwell, NY 13426

www.unityacres.org

*"They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house,
They saw the child with Mary his mother"*

December 27, 2017

Dear Friends of Unity Acres,

Surrounded by this Winter Wonderland up here in Orwell after days and days of Lake Effect Snow coming off of Lake Ontario, we are in awe of some of the men who have been out plowing, snow blowing, shoveling long before some of us are even awake and preparing the way for us to get to the dining room or in many cases get out to appointments. Since December 3, the First Sunday in Advent, we were preparing the way of the Lord, for His coming as a baby on Christmas Day. Our "season" began the day before on December 2 when the Confirmation Class from Holy Trinity Parish in Fulton brought and served a wonderful Chili Supper. The Dining Room had come alive with the Advent Wreath and in the center of the room a Christmas Tree. We are grateful to this parish for their kindness and generosity.

From that first week-end on it is a blur as so many folks, parishes and groups began their annual trek to Unity Acres bearing gifts for the men who make this humble place their home. Next week we will be singing the refrains *We three Kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse so far*. As those wise men did 2000 years ago, good people like yourselves have traveled up here to Orwell with your gifts for our men. Turkeys, hams, bushels of potatoes, squash, gift bags of goodies for each man, gifts from women in Cortland, hoodies from a Syracuse Parish, candy and calendars, coffee and creamer, cat food and litter, #10 cans and frozen chicken wings, the list is endless, all from people who believe in the Ministry of Unity Acres, a Home for men who have otherwise been homeless.

Several weeks ago a letter went out with a brochure about looking again at a tool to help sustain The Acres for many years to come in providing meals through "Food Team" volunteers. We are in the midst of thanking the many who responded so generously to that quest. We determined that it costs \$5.00 per day to feed one man and we are grateful to those who joined that Team.

On December 14 we were treated once again as we have been for more years than anyone can remember to a Christmas Party provided by the Altar Rosary Society and Men of Christ Our Light Parish in Pulaski. Turkey, Roast Beef and all the trimmings served in our festively decorated Dining Room brought a warm glow and feeling to all of us who were blessed by this annual event. We thank our wonderful neighbors at Christ Our Light!

December 24 (a binomial week-end this year) brought us the Fourth Sunday in Advent which by four o'clock was Christmas Eve. Jim & Deirdre McCarthy braved a trip up from Central Square to provide our small congregation with those powerful Advent songs to close out the Season and *We wish you a Merry Christmas* after closing with *Let the Valleys be raised and the mountains made low, every meadow and field overturn, make the pathway straight and the highway run smooth for the coming of God in our day.* (On a personal note, I can't imagine not sharing at least one Advent Mass with Jim).

Brunch followed after Mass and then Loretta with her crew turned the Dining Room into a Christmasland with colorful gifts surrounding the decorated tree in the middle of the room, while Billy and I transformed the Chapel from Advent to Christmas Eve with lighted candles in each window and poinsettias surrounding the Altars and of course the Manger with figures made years ago by our Carol Guthrie..

Christmas Eve brings out our annual spaghetti and meatball supper followed by the men's gifts and Christmas Morning begins with strains of *O Come All Ye Faithful*. We listen to the ancient words of Scriptures telling us the story of God's coming among His people as a Baby, *Emmanuel, God is with us.* The Gospel of John proclaims "*This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me'. From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*" *Little Drummer Boy* dampens a few eyes as well as *Silent Night* after Communion and then we stand and *Joy to the World* fills our Chapel and we trudge lightly through the snow over to the Dining Room where we're met with aromas of Roasted Turkey and all that goes with it. Christmas has come to Unity Acres and we are grateful.

Today marks the Feast of John the Apostle and Evangelist. John wrote the Gospel proclaimed in our Christmas Mass. He was exiled to the Island of Patmos in 95 A.D. Located in the Aegean Sea, near the west coast of present-day Turkey, Patmos was a rocky, volcanic island with few trees. "*I, John your brother, who share with you the distress, the kingdom, and the endurance we have in Jesus, found myself on the island called Patmos because I proclaimed God's word and gave testimony to Jesus.*" Rev. 1:9

Happy Feast Day John and to all the sons-John in our lives and a Blessed and Happy, Holy and Healthy New Year to all our dear friends and supporters.

Peg McCarthy

During the above Newsletter, we had not mentioned our Organist Mary Agnes Roy. Mary is in Short Term Rehab at present after having spent nearly three months in University Hospital receiving treatment. She is in our thoughts and prayers daily.

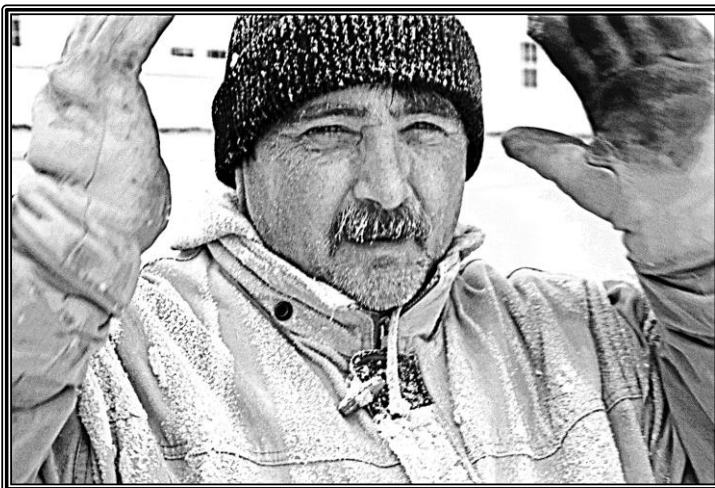
Our Masses through these past months have been rather shallow without Mary's skillful and meaningful music.

We miss you Mary Agnes - We love you and we pray for your healing.
Our prayers to Phil, Mary's other half, to hang in there. *You Raise Her Up* Phil,
You are the wind in her sails. God Bless You too.

POST SCRIPT: January 15, 2018

Our newsletters during 2017 recorded the deaths of 12 men who had been part of the Unity Acres community: current residents, former residents settled in the area or in nursing homes, members of our community of support ... We reported, too, a few details of their funeral and burial arrangements: most were buried at our own Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, up on the hill, as our 'old-timers' say; and most of the funeral services, too, at Sacred Heart Chapel, with Father Jones presiding.

To round out our reporting for the year, sadly, two other names must be added to the roster of men who passed on during 2017: JAMES FULLER and DONALD HATHEWAY.



Jim first arrived at the Acres in 2004, and shortly thereafter took charge of the day-to-day care of the small herd of cattle that we had in those days. During the spring and summer months, this entailed driving through the woods to Saint Francis Farm twice daily, checking on the cattle, watering, moving them from one grazing area to another. During the rest of the year, the cattle stayed in their 'winter quarters' at the Acres, but Jim still had to get them water and feed on a daily basis, slogging through the snow, carrying heavy bales of hay... Jim kept at this job until we ended the cattle-raising project at the end of 2007, and subsequently he assisted in the cutting, splitting, stacking of firewood. Jim remained at the Acres until 2013, and eventually settled at the Pontiac Terrace Apartments in Oswego. We would hear his news on a sporadic basis, and he spent an afternoon's visit here within the last year or two. In October, we learned that Jim had been admitted to St. Joe's in Syracuse, then transferred to a skilled nursing facility in Oswego, where he died on Monday, October 23. Jim's funeral Mass was celebrated on Friday the 27th, with burial at Saint Martin de Porres cemetery following.



During the same week that we had heard of Jim being admitted to Saint Joe's, Don Hatheway had been transported to Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown. Don first came to the Acres in 1996, and I was reminded in the

days before his death that he had been in charge of the basement dormitory for some time during the mid- to late-1990s. After leaving his dormitory duties to others, Don took on the role of ground-keeper in the Acres Community. Don spent many a productive – and I

trust – happy, hour on the John Deere riding lawn mower, cutting grass and doing other chores in the yards. With gradually declining health in recent years, Don had to retire from his grounds-keeping duties. During the last several months he became fairly dependent on neighbors (Matt and Ernie, especially) for getting his meals, housekeeping and so on. After several days in the hospital, we received word that Don would be transferred to the in-patient Hospice facility in Watertown. Several of us had the chance to make visits with Don at the Hospice, and we were happy to see how comfortable and well cared-for he was. He remained in the Hospice until his death on December 13th. Don's funeral Mass was celebrated at the Acres on December 18th; he will be buried at Saint Martin de Porres Cemetery, here at the Acres during the spring.

Jim and Don, Rest in Peace.

ADVENT PRAYER CHRISTMAS

This prayerful tribute from Unity Acres is to express our thanks to God and to reflect on the “wonders He has wrought.”

Loving God, You have given us so much, and we respond, for all in the Unity Acres Community, with grateful hearts we pray. It is most fitting at this holy and joyful celebration of the Birth of Jesus.

“Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I say Rejoice! Indeed, the Lord is near.” -Phil. 4.5 “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks. Do not quench the Spirit.” -1 Th 5.16-19. “May you be preserved, blameless for the coming of God.” -1 Thes. 5.23

GOD BLESS YOU – – FATHER JONES