



Parish Tidings



**Polish National
Catholic Church**
"through the years..."

Our Lord's Ascension Parish

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Cornerstones



Helen Trexler celebrating her 90th birthday

I was born Helen Sanczyk in Allentown, PA on November 21, 1922 to Paul and Anna Sanczyk. Both of my parents came to America from Poland, but met each other and were married here. I lived in the house I was born in Allentown for 85 years until I moved in with my daughter and her family. I had two sisters and two brothers, but no other relatives in America. All my aunts, uncles, and cousins were still living in Poland. I was fortunate to meet a few relatives when I went to Poland with my daughter when I was 75. I couldn't have been born into a better environment, because we lived in what was considered the "melting pot" with immigrants from many countries. It was very convenient because we had everything within walking distance, including our church. We attended church regularly and the priest taught us to read, write and sing in Polish. I began singing in the church choir at the age of 10. When Allentown lost their church due to the depression, we did not attend church for a number of years having no transportation available. At that time we only had trolleys - no buses and our family did not have a car. The children from Allentown were able to practice singing and dancing with the Bethlehem children at the Polish Day celebrations at Central Park, so I got to meet members from the Bethlehem parish at that time.

After meeting my husband, Donald Trexler, we were married in the Bethlehem church on October 28, 1944. We have one son, Donald and one daughter, Lynn Wunderler who were both raised in the Bethlehem parish. Both my husband and I were active on the church council and I held positions of financial secretary and trustee. I was

a Sunday school teacher for 20 plus years and have been active in both women's societies since I joined the Bethlehem parish. I continue to enjoy singing in the church choir.

I was employed at Keystone Dress as a sewing machine operator for 26 years, before taking leave of absence to take care of my parents when they took ill. After my parents passed away, my husband and I purchased Bailey's Card and Gift Shop, which I ran for 11 years before I retired. For those 11 years I ate breakfast, lunch and dinner out.

I was always physically active, as I enjoyed skating, swimming, water skiing and dancing. I still enjoy dancing today, especially waltzes and polkas.

I have six grandchildren and four great grandchildren that I love dearly. We have always been a close family and do things together, including meeting every Saturday for breakfast at Bull & Bear Restaurant. My future plans are spending time with my loving family and to continue to drive until I'm 110.

The Stars of Bethlehem

Bethlehem, the "Christmas City" is noted for its stars. The Moravian Star and the City of Bethlehem Star atop South Mountain are well-known symbols of our town that reflect a deep religious heritage.

The large wooden star, erected on the top of South Mountain cost \$460.00 in 1937, the same year the

"Christmas City" got its name. The original star was created using four wooden planks, overlapping to create the

eight-point star, not equal in length. It housed one hundred fifty 50-watt bulbs. Through the years, from

1939 until the present day, many changes were made to the structure, such as setting the frame in a concrete base. Old bulbs were replaced with newer, brighter, more

energy efficient bulbs. Visible for twenty miles, a crew of electricians changes the bulbs every two years. Moravians believe in the equality of men and

women so the points of their star are equal in length. The star originated in Germany in the 1830's. It was adopted by the Moravian church as a symbol of the Advent season. It is usually displayed from the first Sunday in Advent and remains until January 6. The traditional Moravian star has 26 points, but can vary from 6 to 100 points. The points of the star may vary, but the significance is always religious in nature - the anticipation of the light of hope to enter into darkness. These points shine into all directions, uniting with other people in all parts of the world. May the stars of Bethlehem shine upon us the blessings of Peace, Hope, and Joy during this Holy Christmas season.

40th Fall Bazaar Survives SuperStorm

In mid-week with half of the bazaar workers still without power due to Hurricane Sandy, a decision to go ahead with the bazaar was made. Fortunately, by Saturday, the skies cleared and people were eager to get back to their regular lives. Unfortunately we had fewer patrons than last year, but we still did very well, especially with kitchen and take-out orders.



December at a Glance

Sunday Mass at 9 AM

Coffee Social after Mass

Bingo every Wednesday at 7 PM

December 2 – Mass at 10:30 AM

Christmas Dinner at Noon

December 4 – Baking of rolls at 7:30 AM

December 8 – Women's Society Christmas Social at Noon – JoAnn's house

December 11 – Committee meeting - 7 PM at Bull and Bear Restaurant

December 24 - Christmas Eve service 8 PM

December 25 – Christmas Day services 9 AM and 11 AM

Worship Service



While Father Bogdan was recuperating from surgery, Dan Broczkowski did a great job presiding as spiritual leader during our Worship Service on Sunday, November 25, 2012. The Central Diocese provided a

Sunday's and Solemnities Emergency Service of Worship which is held only when the local priest or deacon is not available. Although it was not a mass, familiar rites, prayers, readings and songs were included. We thank Dan for his participation and pray for a speedy recovery for Father.

Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia!

That is the way to say "Merry Christmas" in Polish. Among Polish people the most beloved and beautiful of all traditional festivals is that of the Christmas Eve Vigil. It is then that the Wigilia, or Christmas Eve dinner is served. When the first star appears in the eastern sky, the feast to commemorate the birth of the Christ child begins. A thin layer of hay is placed under the white tablecloth in memory of the Christ child born in a manger. Everyone breaks and shares the traditional sacred wafer, or Oplatek, and exchange wishes for good health, wealth, and happiness in the New Year. The wafer is similar to the altar wafer stamped with holy figures. It is known as the bread of love and is often sent to members of the family who could not be in attendance. A lighted candle in the window symbolizes the hope that the God-child may come to share their Wigilia and an extra place is set at the table for the unexpected guest. This belief stems from the ancient Polish adage, "A guest in the home is God in the home." The meal itself is a meatless meal consisting of seven, nine, or eleven courses. Items that would be included in a traditional Wigilia menu are mushroom soup, boiled potatoes (kartofle), pickled herring (sledzie), fried fish, pierogies, beans and sauerkraut (groch i kapusta), a dried fruit compote, babka, platek, assorted pastries, nuts and candies. We asked several women of the parish if they have continued the tradition. Their responses were:

Sonia Kotch told us she generally has about 50 relatives from around the country and serves at least 11 items, but the one constant throughout the years has been a sauerkraut and mushroom side dish.

Mae Skovronsky says she serves all the traditional dishes, but also includes shrimp and broccoli, because her family likes them.

Karen Amate's family serves pierogies and only perogies, but then at exactly midnight takes out the ham for ham sandwiches.

Ranee Anthony serves all the traditional dishes including sauerkraut and dumplings, dried mushroom soup, and poppyseed and noodles.

Lynn Wunderler continues her grandmother's traditional meal. She recalls how hay was put under the tablecloth and an empty chair was placed at the table. The evening began with the eating of prunes and ended by going to midnight mass.

Jo Ann Schaffer's dinner consists of traditional items that her mother served. The three items that are eaten once a year on Christmas Eve are prunes, pickled herring, and homemade cream of mushroom soup which is used as gravy over the pierogies and fried fish.

While Jackie Bayak's large family gathers at the dinner table, she goes around to each family member to acknowledge the accomplishments of each during the past year. They then share the Oplatek before dining on all kinds of meatless dishes.

Mary Ann Bartone's specialty for her dinner is fried smelts and fettuccini.

Wanda Poposki's family especially enjoys the shrimp cocktail and creamed mushrooms as part of their traditional meal.

Where Was Jesus Born?



A lifelong nonreligious man suddenly develops a vague religious urge to join a church. So he sets out to find one. His first stop is a Catholic Church where he asks what he has to do to join. The priest mentions diligent study and the affirmation of the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. Then just to see how much the man knows, asks him where Jesus was born. "Pittsburgh," he answers. "Get out!" cries the shocked priest. Next stop is a Southern Baptist Church where the seeker is told he would have to learn Bible verses, swear belief in the Apostles' Creed, swear off booze, and be baptized by immersion. The Baptist preacher then, to see how much this man knows, asks him where Jesus was born. "Philadelphia?" he asks tentatively. "Get out you heathen!" yells the preacher. Our perplexed protagonist finally walks into a Unitarian Church where he is told all he has to do is sign a membership card. "You mean I don't have to renounce anything, swear to anything, or be dunked in anything?" "That's right. We have no special tests for membership. We support total individual freedom of belief." "Then I'll join! But tell me, where was Jesus born?" "Why in Bethlehem, of course." The man's face lights up. "I knew it was some place in Pennsylvania!"

Apple Streusel Cheesecake Bars

- 1 Pouch (1 lb 1.5 oz) Betty Crocker oatmeal cookie mix
- 1/2 cup firm butter or margarine
- 2 packages (8 oz each) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg
- 1 can (21 oz) apple pie filling
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts



1. Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease bottom and sides of 13x9- inch pan.
2. Place cookie mix in bowl; cut in butter until mixture is crumbly and coarse. Reserve 1 1/2 cups crumb mixture; press remaining crumbs in bottom of pan. Bake 10 minutes.
3. In a bowl beat cream cheese, sugar, flour, vanilla and egg until smooth.
4. Spread cream cheese mixture evenly over partially baked crust. Mix pie filling and cinnamon. Spoon evenly over cream cheese mixture. Sprinkle reserved crumbs over top. Sprinkle with walnuts.
5. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool 30 minutes. Refrigerate to chill, about 2 hours.

A special holiday dessert recipe submitted by Anna Yurchishin

If you have something to share, a story, anecdote, recipe, or up-coming event in your life, please submit it to Jo Ann Schaffer, Lynn Wunderler or Andrea Gritman.



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My Dear Friends,

Every Sunday all Universal Church repeats so significant words from the Creed:

For us men and for our salvation

He came down from heaven:

By the power of the Holy Spirit

He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man

And reciting them we stand on our knee respecting God's will to be a human among men, but without sin. During the upcoming month, December, we will prepare our hearts for this mystery of our faith when the Almighty God decided to become a child, so vulnerable to make us strong. Let replace pronoun 'us' and 'our' in the Creed by 'me' and for 'my' – it will sound so different - "I am so important for Him because He loves me!"

The same time He teaches us that is a wonderful to be a human – He stands among us as our Lord, but also as our brother who knows our life, its happiness and its bitterness. The time of Advent will put in front of our eyes five candles standing on the Advent Wreath as a silent witness of God's approaching. Let stay focused on the signs presented to us by the Church in the liturgy not only spending time on shopping in the mall.

Father Bogdan



Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia