



Lauren McFalls/Photo Intern

Matt Buss settles down in a comfortable chair with his religion book during Jan. 22 religious education classes at Churchville's St. Vincent dePaul Church.

Parish has tradition of reaching out to others

Efforts help form 'family'

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

CHURCHVILLE — This weekend, parishioners at St. Vincent dePaul Church, 11 N. Main St., will take up a collection for Helen Dermody, a parishioner who has undergone two liver transplants.

According to her second cousin by marriage, Tom Dermody: "They'll do good as they always have," he said of the parishioners. Tom Dermody added that the collection will help defray Helen's medical expenses.

Father Dominic F. Mockevicius, pastor, asserted that the parish would do the same for any member of its congregation.

"Our people aren't just numbers," he said. "Especially in a small town like this, we know each other."

In the parish's recently published pictorial, Father Mockevicius emphasized that he sees his fellow Catholics as his own spiritual relations.

"As Family we share so many blessings," he wrote. "As family we share each others' pain and disappointment which makes it so much easier."

St. Vincent dePaul epitomizes Churchville's small-town togetherness, according to its staff members, who added that parishioners are also drawn from such neighboring communities as Bergen, Byron, Brockport and North Chili.

Parish Profile

St. Vincent dePaul



Vital statistics

Name: St. Vincent dePaul Church

Location: 11 N. Main St., Churchville

Year founded: 1868 Significant dates: 1870 — first services held in new church building; 1885 — current church built; 1969 — church interior remodeling begins; 1980s — church renovated, religious education building constructed.

The parish cooperates with three local Protestant churches on a regular basis to promote ecumenism and various charitable efforts, the staff continued.

Probably the most famous of those efforts is Churchville's annual Memorial Day Bed Race.

That's right — participants pay \$25 to speed a bed manned by one occupant and pushed by four other racers down the town's Park Road. The money raised goes to an anti-hunger organization, staff members said.

When they're not racing around in beds, parishioners can gather together

for such events as a monthly movie, or the Thursday morning video series.

"I've been in this parish for 18 years," commented John Cunningham, the parish's secretary and bookkeeper. "I like working in a parish with the people whose families raised them here."

Yet, small-town rootedness does not translate into small-minded narrowness, staff members emphasized.

Much of the parish's life centers on outreach work, noted Mary Ellen Frisch who oversees housekeeping and parish collections.

"So many parishes get into these little clamshells," she said. "There's always something going on here that's reaching out to something else."

She noted that once a month, parishioners are asked to tithe their income and contribute to a collection on behalf of various diocesan ministries.

"That's one of the better ones," she said of the collection.

Father Mockevicius also pointed out that the parish holds three yearly clothing drives, and a monthly food drive that benefits both parishioners and the needy in Monroe County.

And according to the parish's directory, many human development committee members volunteer on a monthly basis at area soup kitchens. Other committee efforts help send fresh sum-



Sharon Stein (right) helps Alexander Tosto review the day's lessons during the Jan. 22 class.

mer produce to such kitchens, and provide gifts for the needy at Christmas and aid to the distraught throughout the year.

In ministering to its own people, the parish offers both children's and adult religious education programs, explained Kathy Kuntz and Pat Ver Weire, coordinators. Parents are also required to study sacramental catechesis at home along with their children who are preparing to receive the sacraments, they added.

The parish also offers extensive opportunities for adults and children to sing under the direction of J. Carl Vollbracht, said Father Mockevicius.

EDITORS' NOTE: To learn more about St. Vincent dePaul, call 716/293-1400.

The parish is also accepting donations on behalf of Helen Dermody. Send any contributions to: St. Vincent dePaul Church, 11 N. Main St., Churchville, 14428.

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