

OFFICES CLOSED

The diocesan and Catholic Messenger offices will be closed December 23-January 2 for the Christmas holiday.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Due immediately:

- Names of parish/school employees and their volunteers who work with children or dependant adults four times or more a year.
- Outstanding background check forms (as notified by Lynnette Sowell). Please send them to Char Maaske.

To verify status of names or background checks contact Lynnette Sowell, sowells@davenportdiocese.org.

STEWARDSHIP OFFICE

Hospitality: Twenty parishes were represented at Richard McCorry's workshop on hospitality and spirituality in November. McCorry talked about the model for promoting hospitality used in the Baltimore diocese with success. During his presentation he showed clips from a video "What Visitors See." The Stewardship Office has purchased this 45-minute video and any parish is welcome to borrow it by contacting Dan Ebener, ebener@davenportdiocese.org. Stewardship Commission members are available to help any parish wishing to promote better hospitality. Our booklet, "Christian Hospitality" can be found in the stewardship section of our diocesan website.

2012 Conference: The annual conference for the International Catholic Stewardship Council will be held on September 16-19 in Chicago.

CATHOLIC FOUNDATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

The annual report and update on our capital campaign is attached. This can be copied back to back and inserted in your parish bulletin or made available to pick up in your church entrance or parish hall.

FINANCE OFFICE

Falls on steps and sidewalks increase during the winter season. Here are a few measures that should be considered to safeguard the people, facilities and ministries of our communities.

- Take special care to see that steps and sidewalks are clean and well tended.
- GuideOne Insurance has issued a directive that each location must keep a salt and sanding log book. This will provide documentation in case of an accident.
- Have the employees responsible for snow removal wear the appropriate footwear.
- When possible, offer assistance to anyone who might have difficulty walking.

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

To report child abuse contact: Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 800-362-2178 and if it involves clergy or church personnel also notify Alicia Owens, Victim Assistance Coordinator, 563-349-5002, or mail to yacdav@attglobal.net or PO Box 232, Bettendorf, IA 52722-0004.

SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE

Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) Collection: Thank you for participating in this year's collection. Your generous support will give those in poverty the support they need to make lasting changes. If you missed the collection, it isn't too late by making a check payable to the Diocese of Davenport and marked CCHD Collection. You may submit it to your parish or mail it directly to the Diocese of Davenport, 780 West Central Park Ave., Davenport IA 52804-1901.

2012 Operation Rice Bowl Materials: Order cards were mailed to all parishes in early October. If you did not order by using this card you may place an order by going to <http://orb.crs.org/> and clicking on "order form" at the top of the page or calling 1-800-222-0025. Your order will be shipped in early January.

Diocesan Immigration Office site visits for Ottumwa and Columbus Junction: The office is making site visits to Ottumwa on the first Tuesday of each month by appointment only from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. and for Columbus Junction the second Wednesday of each month by appointment only from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The office helps reunite families split by immigration; helps immigrants adjust their immigration status and advocates on their behalf. For more information regarding the site visits contact the office at 563-324-1911.

Social Ministry Gathering: February 12-15 in Washington, DC. This year's theme is *Faithful Citizenship: Promoting Human Life, Dignity, and the Common Good*. Please visit <http://www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/catholic-social-ministry-gathering/>. Registration will open soon and early bird registration ends December 23 with a cost of \$295.

World Peace Day, January 1: "Educating Young People in Justice and Peace" is the theme for the 2012 celebration of World Peace Day. Pope Benedict XVI's statement can be found at <http://www.zenit.org/article-32614?l=english>.

National Migration Week January 8-14: *Welcoming Christ in the Migrant* is this year's theme. Promotional materials and can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/> or call USCCB Publishing at 800-235-8722. They are available in English and Spanish.

2012 Legislative Priorities: The Iowa Catholic Conference has approved its list of 2012 legislative priorities. They can be found at: http://iowacatholicconference.org/bins/site/templates/default.asp?area_2=pages%2FICC+Web+Site%2FIssues+Priorities%2FIssues

St. Vincent's Home Corporation Grants: Spring grants will no longer be awarded. Grants will only be awarded once a year in the fall. The next grant deadline is **September 15** and all applications must be postmarked by that date. Applicants are to be located within the 22 counties of the Diocese of Davenport or serve children within the diocese. The grant application and criteria are available at <http://www.davenportdiocese.org/socialaction/sastvincenthomecorporation.htm>. If you received a grant in the past you must also submit your progress report by September 15. New funding applications will not be considered until Progress Reports regarding previously awarded grants have been submitted. For questions or information contact the office of Social Action at 563-888-4210.

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

NET (National Evangelization Teams) Ministries will be in our diocese in January to present retreats at parishes and schools. There are two open dates on the NET schedule: January 17 and January 20. More information about NET ministries can be found at <http://www.netusa.org/netretreats/>. To arrange a retreat for your school or parish, contact Pat Finan at finan@davenportdiocese.org.

The **Teens Encounter Christ** retreat will be held Feb. 18-20 at St. Ann's Parish in Long Grove. TEC is a three-day retreat focusing on the Paschal Mystery (dying, rising and going forth to serve Christ). It is for youth in grades 11 and 12, and college freshmen. Registration material will be e-mailed soon to all parish leaders. Adults and young adults wishing to serve on the TEC team should contact Pat Finan at (641) 842-5148 or finan@davenportdiocese.org

Junior High Youth Rally will be March 25 at Regina Catholic Education Center in Iowa City. Our keynoter will be Vince Nims. Go to www.davenportyouth.org or Diocese of Davenport Youth Ministry on Facebook for information on this and all other youth ministry events and programs.

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser will be the speaker for the 2012 Iowa Faith Formation Conference, to be held Saturday, April 14, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Hiawatha. Fr. Rolheiser, a nationally syndicated columnist featured weekly in *The Catholic Messenger*, will speak on "Living the Ups and Downs of our Faith: Dark Nights and Doubt, A Failure of Faith or a Failure of Imagination?" The event will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Coming soon will be a flyer of more information.

Marriage Encounter Retreat Weekend: February 17-19, Our Lady of Victory Church, Davenport. Give the gift of love to each other, renew your marriage relationship, improve your couple communication and enhance your mutual commitment. Whether you have been married one year, 20 years or more, you will enjoy this opportunity to spend quality time together away from everyday demands. All discussions are private between you and your spouse. The cost is \$95 and includes five home-cooked meals. To register or for more information contact Joe and Tracy Ripslinger at 563-388-0355 or tracy@ripslinger.com. There is no better way to say “I Love You.”

Marriage and Parenting Resource: Attached is the December issue of “Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers.” This is produced by Susan Vogt and she has excellent resources to support couples and families. Go to: <http://www.susanvogt.net/index.html>. Attached also is list of holiday de-stressing suggestions for couples.

Marriage Preparation Weekends:

- January 28-29: Bettendorf, St. John Vianney, *registration deadline is January 20* (limited to 40 couples)
- February 25-26: Bettendorf, St. John Vianney, *registration deadline is February 17* (limited to 40 couples)
- April 28-29: Williamsburg, St. Mary, *registration deadline is April 20*
- August 11-12: Mount Pleasant, St. Alphonsus, *registration deadline is August 3*

The registration form is on the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org (Chancery>Faith Formation > Marriage and Family). Registration is \$125 per couple. For information about marriage preparation in our diocese or neighboring dioceses contact Barb Butterworth, 563-888-4240 or butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org or IlaMae Hanisch, hanisch@davenportdiocese.org.

Ministry Formation Programs (MFP):

MFP is on YouTube: IlaMae Hanisch gives a 13-minute presentation on the Ministry Formation Program and how it can prepare persons wanting to work in church ministry. To view, click on this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXFkk3f6wbg>.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining a Ministry Formation Program please contact IlaMae Hanisch, 641-791-3435 or hanisch@davenportdiocese.org. We have an on-site group that meets in Davenport at the Chancery and DVD groups that meet once a month in West Burlington, Iowa City, Davenport and Newton (other locations can be added based on geographic location of participants).

You are welcome to join any or all the remaining courses at any time:

Year I: Basic (English):

Dec. 3 & 17	Catholicism	Jan. 21 & 28	Confirmation
Feb. 18 & 25	Eucharist	March 17 & 24	Personal/Pastoral Themes for Ministry
April 21 & 28	Anointing/Reconciliation		

Year I: Basic (Spanish): Ministerio y Ministros Eclesiásticos; Matrimonio; Orden Sacerdotal; El Bautismo; La Reconciliación; La Unción de los Enfermos; La Confirmación; La Eucaristía; Catolicismo and Temas Personales Pastorales para el Ministerio. Sessions will be held at St. James, Washington on the following Sundays, 3-6 p.m.: March 18; April 22; May 20; June 3; July 15 and Aug. 5. (No sessions in Dec., Jan. and Feb.)

Liturgy Specialization Track: Courses and practicum will be held at St. Vincent Center, Davenport, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the following dates:

Dec. 3	Practicum: Liturgy of the Hours	Dec. 17	Eucharist I
Jan. 21	Eucharist II	Feb. 4	SCAP/Weekday Word & Communion Services
Feb. 18	Practicum: SCAP	April 21	RCIA/Triduum
May 12	Parish Devotions (intercultural issues/Marian devotions)	June 2	Parish Devotions (Eucharistic Adoration, Book of Blessings)
June 16	Practicum: Devotions	July 14	Pastoral Care of the Sick, Funerals
Aug. 4	Marriage, Baptism, Reconciliation Services	Aug. 18	Practicum: Funeral Rites

RELIGIOUS GOODS AVAILABLE

Church Light Fixtures: Ten used opaque white canister type chandeliers are available, free for the taking to anyone interested. They are MANNING fixtures and the model is Zurich LP156. They are lamped with six 60 watt and one 300 watt flood. Contact Fr. Steve Ebel, St. Anthony Church, Knoxville, 641-828-7050.

Glory & Praise Song Books: Fr. Pat Lumsden is giving 80 1st edition Glory & Praise song books to anyone who would like them. There is no cost except shipping. Please contact him at 641-946-8298.

SISTERS OF HUMILITY OF MARY

Holiday Movie and Gift Swap: Dec. 3, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Humility of Mary Center, 820 West Central Park Ave., Davenport. Cost: Free.

The Story of Broke, 6:45 p.m.: A new, fun and informative short film from the Story of Stuff project, *The Story of Broke* challenges the prevailing wisdom in Washington that America is broke. The fact is our government spends billions to prop up obsolete and destructive industries – what we’re calling a “Dinosaur Economy.” There IS money out there – OUR money. It’s time to rebuild the American Dream; but this time, let’s build it better!

New this year, cartoons with a message. Fun for the whole family!

The CHM Holiday Gift Swap Meet: *before and after the movie.* Why buy new stuff? As a way to reduce, reuse and recycle everyone is invited to bring new or gently used items that are currently gathering dust on a closet shelf. Then go shopping for that perfect gift for your loved ones...**no money necessary!** Leftover items will be donated to Humility of Mary Housing and Shelter Programs.

OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIE, WHEATLAND

Advent Come to the Quiet: December 13, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm lunch included, Kathleen Storms, SSND. During the harried preparation for Christmas the real reason for Christmas is often forgotten. Come to the Prairie to step out of the hectic pace and into the stories of scripture which tell of the coming of Jesus. Enjoy the darkest time of the year to await the coming of the Light of the world. Gift yourself or a loved one with a spiritual treasure before Christmas! Fee: \$15 -- includes lunch.

Thresholds & New Beginnings: January 6-8, Friday evening, 7:00 pm to Sunday noon, Kathleen Storms, SSND. New Year’s resolutions go nowhere without a plan in mind. The decision to begin anew, to make some concrete changes in life is a threshold moment. Step over into a whole new life, be changed, be freed, and see from a fresh and new perspective. This is an invitation to a new beginning! Fee for 2 overnights and all meals: \$200.

Or come for a personal day of quiet at the Prairie. Kathleen Storms, SSND is available for spiritual direction. Call to set up an appointment: 563-374-1092.

Groups of all kinds find The Prairie ideal for a variety of meetings. Up to 30 people can be accommodated for events of one day and 15 overnight. Interested groups can plan their own program or request a presenter from a suggested list. Individuals are welcome to spend a day or several days with comfortable and quiet overnight lodging available for a reasonable cost.

Visit www.chmiowa.org to learn more about Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat. For direct inquiries: 563-336-8414 or olpretreat@gmail.com.

BENET HOUSE RETREAT CENTER, ROCK ISLAND, IL

To register call 309-283-2108 or go online: retreats@smmsisters.org. All events held at Benet House Retreat Center, 2200 88th Avenue West, Rock Island, IL 61201-7649. To register contact Sr. Jackie Walsh at 309-283-2108 or retreats@smmsisters.org.

The Word among Us: Read, reflect, pray and share with other committed Christians seeking to grow in reflecting on the challenges of Scripture for everyday life. We share a new book each month. Presenter: Sr. Charlotte Sonnevile, OSB; Mondays each month, Dec. 5 & 19; Jan. 9 & 23. Fee: \$5/session + cost of books or \$50 for series + cost of books.

Centering Prayer: Come and join the Centering Prayer group. This prayer method provides a way to foster a deep relationship with God. Leader: Sr. Catherine Cleary, OSB; Wednesdays, 1-2 pm.

Advent Day of Reflection: Amazing Words – “And the Word Became Flesh...And Dwells Among Us.” (Jn1:14): Dec. 3, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Join other men and women also amazed that a God would come to earth! What does that mean for us, since we, too, are flesh, amazing, and have God’s life within our hearts? Spend the day in quiet, prayer, discussing and reflecting on how the reality of God within us calls us to a spirit of love, caring, goodness and gratitude in imitation of Jesus Christ. Presenter: Sr. Catherine Cleary, OSB. Fee: \$30 (incl. lunch).

Silent Directed Retreat: A Time to Grow in Favor Before God: Sun., Jan. 15, 4 pm registration-Wed., Jan. 18, 4 pm. Begin the New Year with this three-day retreat offering time for prayer, reflection and silence. Daily conferences with a spiritual director provide opportunities to speak about your relationship with God, your prayer life, and other faith issues in your heart. *Spiritual Directors:* Sr. Catherine Cleary, OSB, MA Theology, MS Psychology; Fr. Mark DeSutter, MA Theology. Fee: NEW EARLY BIRD SPECIAL: Register and pay by Dec. 31 to save \$15! Registrations and payment received after Dec. 31: Pay \$240.

Seeking God Always and in All Ways: Fri., Jan. 27, 7 pm-Sun., Jan. 29, 1 pm. This retreat is for single women 25-45 who desire to seek God more deeply in their lives. Enjoy time for quiet, prayer (private and with the Sisters), and reflections on Seeking God always and in all ways. Presenter: Sr. Bobbi Bussan, OSB, MA Religious Education. Fee: \$155.

Moral Issues in Decision-Making for Health Care: Sat., Jan. 28, 9 am-12 pm. We will reflect on ethical and religious directives for Catholic health care services as well as on other sources for decision-making in health care. Our time will be spent not only in understanding ethical principles, but also in applying these principles in actual cases. Presenter: Rev. Michael Schaab, pastor of St. Pius Parish, Rock Island; STL from CUA and Doctor of Ministry from Chicago Theological Seminary. Fee: \$15, plus an option for lunch \$7.50.

CONTEMPLATIVE OUTREACH OF EASTERN IOWA

Centering Prayer Practitioners are invited to attend the following:

- Advent Retreat: Dec. 3, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., \$15, St. Andrew Church, Blue Grass
- Silent Saturdays: January 21, February 11, March 24 and April 21, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Humility of Mary Center, Davenport
- False Self Film Festivals: January 8 and March 4, 1- 4 p.m., Holy Family Parish Office, Davenport
- Local support groups are also available.

For information on any of the above call Lolita Dierickx, 563-285-7242.

SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS, CLINTON

Advent Vespers: The Sisters of St. Francis invite the public to join them at Vespers – Evening Prayer – on each of the remaining Sunday evenings of Advent, Dec. 4, 11 and 18, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the chapel of The Canticle, their home, at 841-13th Ave. No., Clinton. The 45-minute service will include song, reflecting on the Scripture readings of the Advent season and praying together for the blessings of Christmas-time. Parking is available in front of The Canticle. Directions to The Canticle are on the website.

People, Politics, and Peace: Reflections from Our Holy Land Pilgrimage: December 8, 6:30 p.m. Sister Judy Herold, SSND pastoral associate at St. Anthony Church, Davenport and Carrie Delcourt wife, mother of two adult children, and an educator at Black Hawk College, Moline, IL will share the experiences of their recent journey to the Holy Land and their deeper commitment to peace. To be held at Jesus Christ Prince of Peace Church, 1105 LaMetta Wynn Drive, Clinton. Free and open to the public. Directions to the church are on the website: <http://jcpop.org/>. Co-sponsored by Prince of Peace Pax Christi and the Clinton Franciscan Center for Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking.

For more information, call 563-242-7611 or visit www.clintonfranciscans.com.

SHALOM RETREAT CENTER, DUBUQUE

To register call 563-582-3592 or send check payable to Shalom Retreat Center with your contact information to: 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001. www.shalomretreats.org, info@shalomretreats.org

Making Straight the Path: Advent Reflections

Saturday, Dec. 10, 9:00am – 1:00pm, Presenter: Msgr. James Barta

It's one of the busiest seasons of the year and by this point, many of us are already beginning to feel stressed and more than a little unfocused on the real meaning of the season. Take time on this Saturday morning to reflect on what Advent is all about: the coming of God in our lives. The pace will be both stimulating and relaxed, and we'll close with lunch. Offering: \$30, includes lunch. Register by Dec. 7.

Songs of the Season: An Evening of Advent & Christmas Music & Readings

Monday, Dec. 12, 6:00 – 9:00pm, Presenters: Dubuque Community Musicians

Gather with friends/family to share a meal as well as the songs of the season, those recorded in Scripture and those of modern times. Offering: \$22. Register by Dec. 7.

Healing Hurts & Regrets: Forgiving & Healthy Alternatives to Forgiving

Fri., Feb. 24, 7:00pm – Sun., Feb. 26, 1:00pm, Director: Gary Egeberg

Though our brains are "wired" to remember our hurts for survival purposes, they are also wired for healing. If you are unable to forgive someone, or if you can't seem to forgive yourself, learn how to honor your own unique way of healing. Discover a variety of spiritual and psychological tools. You will learn . . .

- When forgiving is likely to work well and when a healthy alternative might be more effective
- How to keep the focus on your needs rather than on your offender, so that you can heal
- Ways to manage disturbing thoughts and upsetting emotions so that you can enjoy more peace of mind and heart
- How to reinterpret your life through a gentle and compassionate lens

Offering: \$165. Commuter: \$145. Register by Feb. 17, 2012. (\$50 deposit)

Lenten Retreat: Transformation – The Music of God

Sun., Feb. 26, 5:30pm – Fri., March 2, 9:30am

Director: Tom Hartle OFM, Franciscan friar of Holy Name Province & itinerant retreat director, pilgrimages leader to Rome and Assisi, ministerial roles: parish ministry, retreat house staff member, presenter of parish missions. Using the Lenten Scriptures, and drawing upon Francis and Clare, we will come to understand Metanoia as the Music of God, Prayer as the Music of God, and Penance as the Music of God. Daily Eucharist.

Offering: \$365. Early Bird: \$340, if registered by Feb. 1, 2012. (\$75 deposit)

Concert — Take Back the Light

Friday, March 23, 2012, 7:00 – 9:00pm

Jan Phillips - gifted musician, dynamic speaker & author

An evening of music, video and storytelling to celebrate our community, our collective potential and our creativity.

Offering: \$17.50, if registered/paid by Mar. 21, after Mar. 21: \$20.

— Concert & Workshop —

The WORD, The IMAGE, The STORY: Tools of Transformation

Friday, March 23, 7:00pm – Sunday, March 25, 2012, 1:00pm

Jan Phillips - gifted musician, dynamic speaker & author

In this multi-sensory, multi-media workshop, we'll be using music, poetry, story and video to help us access our unique wisdom and find new ways to share it personally and professionally.

Concert / Workshop Offering: \$160. Early Bird: \$145, if registered by Feb. 24.

Commuter: \$130. \$50 nonrefundable deposit secures reservation.

To support the ministry of your parish, school and the diocese these groups automatically receive the *Mini-Messenger*:

Deacons	Diocesan Corporate Board	Youth Ministers	Pastoral Associates	Directors/Coordinators of Faith Formation
Parishes	Catholic Foundation Board	Sisters	RCIA Parish Contacts	Diocesan Liturgical Commission
Priests	Parish Lay Directors	Bookkeepers	Diocesan Board of Education	Diocesan Planning Commission
Seminarians	Diocesan Pastoral Council	Principals		

Other interested persons are welcome to subscribe. If you have questions regarding your subscription contact Laurie Hoefling, hoefling@davenportdiocese.org.

Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Davenport



Annual Report/Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2011/Update

Established in February 2009, the mission of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Davenport (CFDD) is to “*encourage, solicit, accept and manage gifts in order to foster stewardship and distribute income so as to advance the priorities of the Diocese of Davenport and its entities according to Gospel values.*”

The Diocese of Davenport conducted a capital campaign, *Moving Forward in Faith and Hope*, during 2009-2010. The goal of \$22,000,000 was successfully reached in August 2010 with pledges to be paid over three-to-five years. All pledge payments are deposited in the CFDD account.

Goals of campaign

- Purchase and renovate the Chancery building (diocesan offices) in Davenport
- Operational support for the diocese
- Seminary education and vocations
- Healthcare for priests unable to minister
- Deacon formation
- Social action and Catholic Charities
- Faith formation
- Catholic schools
- Sacred Heart Cathedral renovation and maintenance
- Twenty percent of pledge payments returned to parishes

Accomplishments

- 20% of pledge payments are being sent back to the parishes on a semi-annual basis.
- Campaign expenses were paid.
- The Chancery building was purchased and renovated.
- Remaining assets are invested with Christian Brothers Investment Services.

Policies for gift acceptance and investments

These policies were written by the Board of Directors and can be found on the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org under development. The annual audit of the Foundation can also be found there.

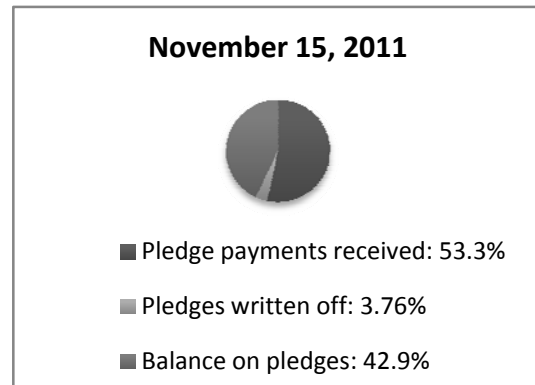
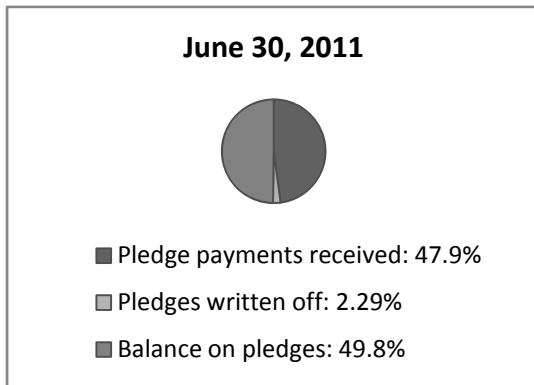
Distributions

To date \$1,987,152 has been returned to parishes. Parishes will continue to receive checks each January and July as long as pledge payments are received from their parishioners. This distribution list can be found on the diocesan website.

Investment policy and distributions

Four percent of the fair market value of the financial assets for twelve rolling quarters will be distributed annually according to the Case Statement. The first distribution was made in July 2011 with **\$58,696** to the Diocese of Davenport and **\$11,037** to the diocesan schools. Schools received a check ranging from \$2,098 to \$243.

As the principal in the Catholic Foundation grows, the distribution will increase. This will help support the ministries and programs the diocese provides to its parishes and their parishioners. Payments from the Foundation to diocesan schools will also increase. An estate gift to the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Davenport will live on for many years to come.



CFDD Board of Directors

Bishop Martin Amos
Ex officio

Sister Laura Goedken, OP, Diocese of Davenport
Director of Development, staff to the Board

Tonja Jirak: St. Mary Parish, Fairfield
Certified public accountant, part-time project director and grant coordinator for Van Buren SAFE Coalition, homeschool mother

David Miller: SS. John & Paul Parish, Burlington
CEO of The Growth Coach

Molly O'Meara Schnell: Sacred Heart Parish, Davenport
Attorney/Shareholder, Schnell & Hancock P.C., Davenport

Joe Welsh: St. Peter Parish, Lovilia
Retired IT executive

Mary Babinat: Sacred Heart Parish, Newton
Certified public accountant

Msgr. John Hyland: Diocese of Davenport
Vicar General, ex officio

Char Maaske: Diocese of Davenport
Chief Financial Officer, certified public accountant, staff to the Board

James Nepple: Ss. Mary & Mathias Parish, Muscatine
Estate planning attorney, Nepple Law, PLC

Stan Reeg: St. Joseph Parish, DeWitt
Investment advisor, Wells Fargo Advisors

Doug Young: St. Patrick Parish, Iowa City
Semi-retired, director of financial management/budget for University of Iowa

Marriage Moments & Parenting Pointers

DECEMBER - 2011



I offer you these tidbits of wisdom as prayer prompts to remind you (and your constituents) of the sacredness of marriage vows and the value of every child. The commitment to love a spouse forever, and the generous gift of life parents offer a child are indeed spiritual undertakings and cannot be done alone. May the God of Love be with you and your work.

*FOR MORE extended marriage and parenting articles, plus archived Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers, go to: www.SusanVogt.net

*BLOG: *Letting Go...*
www.SusanVogt.net/blog

*EDUCATORS, LEADERS, & MINISTERS: You are welcome to reprint these MM's and PP's in bulletins, newsletters, and on your website with proper credit, ("By Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net") When used on a website, please also link to my website, www.SusanVogt.net

MARRIAGE MOMENTS

445. Dec. 5: Tomorrow is the feast of St. Nicholas. Consider putting a treat in your spouse's shoe (a chocolate kiss, a love note, a coupon for a favor like a backrub or a chore you'll relieve your spouse of the next day).

446. Dec. 12: In Catholic tradition, Dec. 12 is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe - a feast of miracles when Mary appeared in the skin color of the indigenous Mexican people. Have there been any miracles in your marriage (recovery from an illness, revitalization of your love, remembering to check the car's oil)?

447. Dec. 19: "Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary.'" (Lk 1:31) Sometimes it can be frightening to embark upon a big change in life - a birth, a death, changing a job, retirement...Call to mind a current or past fear. Trust that sharing it with your beloved will be safe.

448. Dec. 26: On this second day of Christmas, pause, look at your true love, and appreciate the gift you are to each other. Hopefully, the frenzy of Christmas Day has waned and you can rest in each other's company for a moment. It's a better gift than two turtle doves.

PARENTING POINTERS

444. Dec. 2: Advent is the season we prepare again for Jesus coming into the world. It's also a very hectic time for most families. Pause today to remember the reason for the season. Light a candle on the Advent wreath to calm yourself and your children.

445. Dec. 9: Technology both simplifies and complicates our lives. Perhaps your children will be getting a tech gift for Christmas. Think now about family guidelines and time limits for its use. See [Family Tech Tips](#) for help. (Bulletin editors: skip this last sentence for print only PPs)

446. Dec. 16: As we approach the longest night of the year, indulge your kids with favorite bedtime stories. Even older children can reminisce with their favorite stories.

*To SUBSCRIBE, [click here](#).

*ESPAÑOL: Para opciones en español [clic aquí](#).

*To UNSUBSCRIBE, click "Safe Unsubscribe" below.



447. Dec. 23: "How much longer till we get there?"
This familiar travel refrain applies to Advent too. We're almost there, but not quite yet. It's hard to wait. Calm yourself and your children with lilting Advent music.

448. Dec. 30: As the year ends, pull out your 2011 calendar and reminisce with your children about joys and sadnesses that that this past year brought.

© 2011 Susan Vogt
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WEBSITE: www.SusanVogt.net

For Couples **I'M DREAMING OF A STRESS-LESS CHRISTMAS**

By Susan Vogt, www.SusanVogt.net

The time leading up to Christmas (Advent) can be a time of reflectiveness and joy, but our expectations (and those of our family and culture) can also leave us physically stressed, emotionally exhausted, and in adversarial relationships with the ones we love most. With some forethought, however, couples can minimize stress and experience the time both before and after Christmas as a time for strengthening family relationships.

Consider the following suggestions, then talk to your spouse and agree on a plan. Keep expectations realistic. What limits do you want to set on the time, money, and energy you spend?

1. **Invite other family members to participate** in decisions affecting them? (For example, don't just declare that this year we'll draw names for gift-giving or presume that everyone will gather at your home for the main Christmas meal.
2. Which Christmas **rituals from your family of origin do you want to continue**? Which from your spouse's family? Are there new ones you'd like to create?
3. List two things you could do to **make your spouse feel less stressed** and more loved.
4. **What gift would your spouse really appreciate**? It need not cost money. Perhaps a gift of time (like a coupon to teach computer skills or take over a dreaded chore) would be more meaningful than another sweater. Best to agree that you're both going to do a "creative gift" ahead of time, however, lest it backfire.
5. Are there any **holiday triggers** that have caused problems in the past? Consider overuse of alcohol, feeling pressure to prepare a special meal, keep the house clean, put up decorations, money worries. Share the concern and plan a way to deal with the potential problem.
6. **Share the burden** of preparing for Christmas. Which jobs do each of you like to do? Which do neither of you like doing? Can some be eliminated and the others shared.
7. Is there a **lonely person** you could invite to share the season with you?
8. If you visit relatives, what **behavior patterns that cause stress** should be avoided?
9. **Decide how much money** you want to spend on gifts and celebrating. In the true spirit of Christmas, consider making one of your gifts a donation to a worthy cause. (For example, our own family has decided to sponsor a partial scholarship to those graduating from our children's high school.)
10. **Give yourself a time-out**. It may be a quiet evening when you agree not to talk about Christmas preparations and just rest in the Advent season of waiting, or simply a pause before dinner when you light an Advent candle and sit in the dark for a moment