

 Bury the dead	 Visit the imprisoned	 Shelter the homeless	Year of Mercy comes to a close See coverage below.	 Give drink to the thirsty	 Feed the hungry
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PRIEST LOVES THE YANKEES
PAGE 3

FaithLife

MERCY WORKS
VISIT A LOCAL CEMETERY, SAYING A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO ARE BURIED THERE.
A spiritual work of mercy for the Holy Year

www.ErieRCD.org BI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE November 6, 2016

Win a \$100 gift certificate to Johnston's Evergreen Nursery, Inc.

Do you know your Christmas trivia? Correctly answer the following question and you may win a \$100 gift certificate to Johnston's Evergreen Nursery in Watford.

A second-place prize will be awarded (the new CD "O Emmanuel," composed by Grammy Award-winning pianist and conductor J.J. Wright).

QUESTION:
In 1934, who wrote the following Christmas letter to Jesus?
(Googling encouraged!)

"Dear Baby Jesus, quickly come down to earth. You will bring joy to children. Also bring me joy."

Email your response to FaithLife@ErieRCD.org no later than noon, Nov. 16, 2016. Provide your name, email and telephone number.

If there are multiple winners, the names will be placed in a random drawing. The winner of the gift certificate and the winner of the CD will be contacted and their names published in the Nov. 27 edition of FaithLife newspaper.

Only one entry per person, please. Employees of St. Mark Catholic Center are not eligible to participate.

Quite a Year of Mercy

Pope says dialogue shows respect for others

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Dialogue is an essential component of mercy because it is the only way a husband and wife can understand each other, people of different religions can live in peace, and the only way the Catholic Church can evaluate what is needed to promote the common good in the world, Pope Francis said.

Good relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, employees and bosses, he said, require one "to listen, explain with meekness, don't bark at the other, don't yell, but have an open heart."



ROME—Pope Francis greets a girl after celebrating a Mass for the sick and disabled in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican June 12. The Mass was an event of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

to dialogue, Pope Francis said. Listening is the only way to know what is in the other's heart and what the other needs. Further, he added, dialogue is an expression of God's love, which reaches out to each person, sowing seeds of goodness. "Dialogue tears down walls of division and misunderstanding, creates bridges of communication and does not allow anyone to isolate him or herself," he added.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Hurricane Matthew relief

A special collection will be taken up in parishes of the Diocese of Erie Nov. 5-6 to provide relief to those portions of the southeastern United States and the Caribbean affected by Hurricane Matthew. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has called for this collection to support the effort of Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA, both of which are providing humanitarian aid to affected areas.

Campaign for Human Development

Catholics in the Diocese of Erie will be asked Nov. 20 to give to the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), an effort founded by U.S. Catholic bishops to break the cycle of poverty in the United States. With the tradition of improving education, housing situations, and community economic development, CCHD assists communities nationwide.

Holy doors in diocese to close Nov. 12-13

The Jubilee Year of Mercy will officially close in the Diocese of Erie the weekend of Nov. 12-13.

Bishop Lawrence Persico will conclude the jubilee with the regularly scheduled Mass Nov. 12 at 4 p.m. at St. Peter Cathedral in downtown Erie. All seven holy doors in churches throughout the diocese will close that weekend.

"This is an opportunity to gather, as the local church, with our bishop to thank God for the blessings of this Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy," said Sister Kathleen Dietz, FSO, vice chancellor of the diocese.

Although the diocese will end the Holy Year Nov. 12-13, the universal church will mark the official closing Nov. 20 at St. Peter Basilica in Rome.



See page 2 for a guest commentary on the holy door at Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Harborcreek.

Transitional deacon ordained

David Whiteford—surrounded by fellow seminarians, friends and members of his family—was ordained into the transitional diaconate for the Diocese of Erie Oct. 8 at St. Mark Seminary in Erie.

Bishop Lawrence Persico called the ordination "a meaningful and significant moment," not only for Whiteford but for the church as a whole.

"If you want your ministry as a deacon to be fruitful, you must remain in the Lord's love by faith and hope. Make no mistake about it, David, the Spirit of God will work in and through you in spite of your own human frailties and in ways far beyond your imagining," the bishop said in his homily at Mass.

Deacon Whiteford is a native of Erie's St. Boniface Parish. He currently attends Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe.



Bishop Lawrence Persico with Deacon David Whiteford.

Professor discusses mercy and Catholic social teaching



Michael Coulter, Ph.D.

FAITHLIFE staff report

Mercy needs to be returned to social and political discourse, says Dr. Michael Coulter, a professor of political science and humanities at Grove City College in Mercer County.

"Mercy should be as prominent as justice," Coulter told a crowd of about 60 people gathered Oct. 24 for a special talk at St. Mark Catholic Center.

Coulter's presentation was one of the final diocesan-wide events marking the Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Diocese of Erie.

There will always be public policy that shows mercy,

i.e. Good Samaritan laws and state-assisted burials for the indigent, Coulter said. But he believes society could do more to include a merciful viewpoint in such areas as immigration, the criminal justice system and refugee outreach. All of these issues have been at the center of current political debate.

"Public policy involves more than justice," said Coulter, who is a member of the Church of the Beloved Disciple, Grove City. "Mercy should be the lens through which we make decisions in the public square."

Battle waged against human trafficking



Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster, England, speaks at a news conference on human trafficking at the Vatican Oct. 27. Also pictured are Al Bangura and Princess Inyang, survivors of trafficking.

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—An unrelenting commitment is needed to prevent people from falling prey to traffickers and to help victims caught in their snares, Pope Francis told representatives of law enforcement agencies and church leaders Oct. 27.

The growing number of people being trafficked are stripped of their dignity, physical and mental integrity and sometimes even their life, the pope said during an audience with the

Santa Marta Group, an international coalition of senior law enforcement chiefs and members of the Catholic Church working together to end human trafficking.

The group was founded in 2014 as part of an initiative begun by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Nearly 21 million people are believed to be victims of human trafficking, according to the International Labor Organization.

News-makers



Snippets of Catholic headlines and stories from around the world from Catholic News Service

■ USCCB to vote for president, vp

WASHINGTON (CNS)—U.S. Catholic bishops, including Erie Bishop Lawrence Persico, are scheduled to elect the next president and vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at their upcoming fall general assembly taking place Nov. 14-16 in Baltimore.

Each office is elected from a slate of 10 candidates who have been nominated by their fellow bishops.

■ Seven Catholic institutions plan to divest from fossil fuel

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Citing Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* on humanity's relationship with the earth and each other, seven Catholic institutions from around the world said they plan

to divest from fossil fuel corporations.

Joining the divestment movement were St. Louis-based SSM Health; Jesuit Fathers of Upper Canada; Missionary Society of St. Columban, based in Hong Kong; Presentation Society of Australia and Papua New Guinea; Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (Salesians) in Italy; Diocese of Umuarama, Brazil; and Federation of Christian Organizations for the International Voluntary Service in Italy.

The organizations join a steadily growing movement that is seeing hundreds of groups worldwide divest from companies involved in the extraction of coal, oil and natural gas in recent years and turning to firms developing renewable energy instead.

Up to 97 percent of climate scientists have attributed climate change to human activity, at least in part.

Pope's visit to Sweden gets personal



Editor's Notes
Mary SOLBERG

My grandmother, Anna Louise Johnson Benson, was born near Malmö, Sweden, more than 130 years ago. A Lutheran, she was a devout Christian who held Bible meetings in her adopted home in Greene Township outside of Erie.

Pope Francis recently traveled to my ancestral home to help commemorate, with our Lutheran brothers and sisters, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. He celebrated Mass in Malmö for the city's tiny Catholic community.

The apostolic trip culminates years of theological progress in the field of ecumenism. In 1999, the Vatican signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and participated in the shared history of the Reformation in the 2013 document, "From Conflict to Communion."

During his visit to Sweden, Pope Francis urged Catholics and Lutherans to recognize what he called past "errors" and move "beyond the controversies and disagreement that have often prevented us from understanding one another."

The pope said the division between Catholics and Lutherans was reinforced over the centuries "by the powerful of this world," rather than average people.

I can attest to that personally. My father, who was born Luther-

an, converted to Catholicism when he married my mother in 1945. The Catholic Church would not allow my parents—both of whom were Christian—to marry on the altar at St. Patrick Church in Erie. They had to say their vows in the church rectory.

Fast forward to 1994, almost 50 years later, when I married a Norwegian Lutheran. The Catholic Church allowed us to marry on the altar, but we could not share the Eucharist. During our 22-plus years of marriage, my husband has remained Lutheran, but he regularly attends Catholic Mass with me and our children. He brings to our marriage a strong, abiding Christian faith that puts me to shame on many levels.

These are the issues that Pope Francis is trying to address. He often speaks of the need for all Christians to come together in a world besieged by terror and all manner of catastrophe. A strong Christian faith—whether it's Lutheran or Catholic—also helps us face problems that may arise around the kitchen table.

The world benefits from a unified front.

As Pope Francis said in his homily in Sweden: "We Christians will be credible witnesses of mercy to the extent that forgiveness, renewal and reconciliation are daily experienced in our midst. Together we can proclaim and manifest God's mercy, concretely and joyfully, by upholding and promoting the dignity of every person. Without this service to the world and in the world, Christian faith is incomplete."

Mary Solberg is the editor of FaithLife. Email: msolberg@ErieRCD.org. Call 814-824-1171. Twitter: @ERIERCDsolberg

God continues to open holy doors



Guest Commentary
Brandon Vogt

What better way to celebrate the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy than at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Harborcreek?

On Jan. 1, 2016, the entrance to Mary's Chapel at Our Lady of Mercy became a holy door of mercy. We were chosen as one of seven pilgrimage sites where the faithful could visit in the Diocese of Erie.

No one at Our Lady of Mercy anticipated all the blessings we would experience this year. We were challenged to provide the best hospitality we could to those who visited our church for the first time.

Our pastoral staff made a concentrated effort to explain the Year of Mercy, the sacrament of reconciliation, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the concept of indulgences. We offered reconciliation services, the Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic exposition and adoration, and most recently, a musical concert.

Many people—some from as far away as the states of California, Washington and Massachusetts—visited Our Lady of Mercy this year and signed the register book we created specifically for the Year of Mercy.

Groups from the Diocese of Erie that passed through our holy door included the Franklin and Oil City Cursillo, Our Lady of Peace and St. Jude the Apostle faith sharing, the Ladies Guild at St. Anthony Parish in Tionesta, members of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania, and the St. George/Springhill Legion of Mary.

Msr. Gerald Ritchie, pastor, has said how inspiring it was to see so many visitors to our holy door. "We hope and pray that those who

entered the holy door might be truly motivated to show God's mercy to those whose lives they touch," he says.

All of us are on a pilgrimage together. Like our ancestors in faith, we pilgrims are bonded into community, journeying together in a spiritual quest with hearts open to new insights into God's mercy.

As the Year of Mercy comes to a close this month, it's good to remember that we all are called to be a pilgrim people on a journey to the eternal holy door of heaven. The opportunity to be involved in the Year of Mercy by hosting a pilgrimage site has prompted me to stop and give thanks for all the doors God opens for us.

Whether or not you have had the opportunity to make a pilgrimage this year, hopefully the doors of our lives and our hearts have been opened a little wider to receive God's bountiful mercy and to share that mercy with others.

Brandon Vogt is the director of pastoral liturgy and music at Our Lady of Mercy Church, Harborcreek.



Contributed photo

Members of the Oil City/Franklin Cursillo group stand in front of the holy door at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Harborcreek. Pictured, from left, are: Sue Hannon, Jim Fryman, Nancy Clemente, Beth Cyphert, Patty Fryman, Sue Williams and Chris Weidle.

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A YANKEES UNIVERSE

Priest maintains love of team despite Yanks not going to World Series

BY MARY SOLBERG | FAITHLIFE

This year's World Series between the Chicago Cubs and the Cleveland Indians was all about answered prayers, but Msgr. Richard Siefert didn't pray for either team.

He's a die-hard New York Yankees fan, a birthright bestowed on him by his late dad, Jack. Father and son regularly traveled from Oil City to Cleveland in the 1950s and '60s to watch the likes of Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris.

"My Yankees weren't in the Series this year, so I didn't care who won," said Msgr. Siefert, pastor of St. Catherine Parish, and administrator of both St. Joseph and St. Michael the Archangel parishes, all in DuBois.

Yankees fans are accustomed to success, having seen their team win a total of 27 World Series titles. But not this year. New York's poor showing in the first half of the season kept them from coming out on top. The Cubs and the Indians both hoped to break decades-long droughts.

Msgr. Siefert's rabid Yankee loyalty prompts parishioners, family and friends to give him memorabilia whenever possible. Over the years, he has amassed some 200 items, ranging from baseballs to books, bats, caps, cards, statues and photos.

"I finally organized it into my Yankee 'shrine' in a side room on the second floor of the rectory [of St. Catherine Parish]," Msgr. Siefert, 68, said.

His most precious possession is an autographed Mickey Mantle baseball, given to him by a former parishioner. One oddity in the collection is a Texas Rangers cap that some parishioners presented to him when the Rangers beat the Yankees in the 2010 playoffs.

"They said it had to go in the Yankee shrine," he said, laughing.

In 2015, celebrating his 40th anniversary as a priest of the Diocese of Erie, Msgr. Siefert received four free tickets to a Yankees game in New York, compliments of behind-the-scenes work by Bishop Emeritus Donald Trautman and some parishioners. During the seventh inning, the jumbotron flashed "Congratulations, Msgr. Siefert."

Although his all-time favorite Yankees player is Mickey Mantle, Msgr. Siefert considers Gary Sánchez, a rookie catcher, to be at the top of the current lineup. This year alone, Sánchez hit about 20 home runs.

Msgr. Siefert's most treasured memory is when he saw several members of the famed team—including Yogi Berra—walk into the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Cleveland. It was about 1960 and the young Siefert and his dad were attending Mass during one of their weekend



Photos by Mary Solberg

Msgr. Richard Siefert, pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, and administrator of St. Joseph and St. Michael the Archangel parishes, all in DuBois, stands with his collection of New York Yankees memorabilia. The "shrine" is in the rectory at St. Catherine.

baseball pilgrimages.

"I was going to get their autographs, but they were gone after Communion," Msgr. Siefert said.

At the time, he was impressed that his baseball idols also went to church. But that's not why he

considered the priesthood. Msgr. Siefert credits former Erie Bishop Edward McManaman for inspiring him as a young child to the religious life.

The evolution of Msgr. Siefert's "Yankee shrine" is inspirational

on another, more temporal, level. He always dreamed of becoming as good a player as Mantle.

The 12-year-old who still resides in him says, emphatically, "The Yankees speak to my soul."



Msgr. Richard Siefert's favorite piece of memorabilia is his autographed Mickey Mantle baseball.

Two women experience Benedictine life

Two women are visiting Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie to experience the Benedictine way of life.

Jessica Chan Varguez, 24, from Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, celebrated her entrance into the Benedicta Riepp Monastic Experience Program of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie. The program offers an immersion in a daily rhythm of prayer, work, outreach to the marginalized, communal life, hospitality, peace and nonviolence.

Varguez expressed her desire to live monastic life with the community for a period of five months.

Erin Carey, 22, a graduate of the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn., will be with the Benedictine community for a year as a participant in the Benedictine Women Service Corps (BWSC), an outreach of St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph.

BWSC invites recent graduates to join a monastic community in deepening relationships that support justice globally. During her time with the Erie Benedictines, Carey will explore her interest in working for justice for children, especially for those lacking educational opportunities.



Contributed photo

Erin Carey, left, will spend a year with the Benedictine Sisters of Erie as part of the Benedictine Women Service Corps (BWSC). Jessica Chan Varguez has committed to the five-month Benedicta Riepp Program.

EVENTS

Prep and Villa to present 'Merchant of Venice'

ERIE—Cathedral Prep and Villa Maria Academy will present William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice" at Villa Maria Academy Auditorium, 2403 W. 8th St., Erie, Nov. 10-12 at 7 p.m., and Nov. 13 at 2 p.m. The play centers around the quality of mercy, an appropriate theme in this Holy Year of Mercy. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors. Tickets are available at the door. For more information, call 814-838-2061, ext. 0, or 814-453-7737, ext. 275.

Youth video examines increased violence

ERIE—The public is invited to watch and discuss a video created by Erie youth on the increased incidence of violence in the community.

"Stop the Violence—Have Courage" will be shown Nov. 20 at 3:30 p.m. at Mercyhurst University's Zurn Hall, Room 114. The creation of the video was sponsored by the following organizations: House of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network, Inner-City Neighborhood Art House, Community Access Television, Mercyhurst University Service Learning and Campus Ministry. The project was funded by a grant from the City of God Foundation.

Nativity set raffle benefits Catholic education

ERIE—The winner of the 12-inch, 17-piece Fontanini Nativity set from the former St. Peter Cathedral School will be announced Nov. 27 at noon at the downtown Erie parish.

Raffle tickets for the set are still being sold after any Mass at St. Peter, or at the rectory office on W. 10th Street, Mon-

days through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m. Proceeds from the raffle will benefit the parish Catholic Education Endowment Fund. Tickets are \$10 each, or three for \$25. For more information, contact Sally DiBacco at 814-825-3639.

Pancake breakfast to benefit DuBois student

DUBOIS—The community of DuBois Central Catholic is sponsoring a benefit breakfast Nov. 13 from 8 a.m. to noon for Shea McKinney, a DCC second-grader who was recently diagnosed with AML leukemia. All proceeds will go directly to Shea's family to help defray expenses for her series of chemotherapy treatments at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh.

The cost for breakfast is \$8 for adults; \$5 for children 10 and under. Donations for the family also will be accepted at the door. For more details or for ticket information, call the elementary school office at 814-371-2570.

Merry Merchant Marketplace scheduled

ERIE—St. Peter Cathedral in Erie presents its shopping fundraiser, "Merry Merchant Marketplace," on Nov. 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cathedral Center, located at the corner of W. 11th and Sassafras streets in Erie. Shop local vendors, crafters and foods at this family friendly event. Free admission and free parking.

Share the spirit to support Bishop's Breakfast

ERIE—Share some Christmas kindness at the Christmas Gift Gathering on Dec. 8 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Prep/

Villa Events Center, 501 W. 12th St., Erie. All are invited to donate items that will benefit the Bishop's Breakfast, an outreach that serves a warm breakfast to men, women and children Mondays through Fridays. Items needed include hats, gloves, warm socks and blankets for adults and children of all ages; undershirts for men in all sizes; and \$5 gift cards to local fast-food restaurants.

Anyone who donates is invited to enjoy cookies and punch. Parking is available in the Walnut Street parking lot adjacent to the Prep/Villa Events Center. Those unable to attend may make a gift by contacting Jennie Hagerty at jhagerty94@gmail.com.

High school girls invited to Testify 7 Retreat

CRANBERRY, Pa.—The Testify 7 Discipleship Retreat for high school girls will be held Dec. 9-11 at the St. Thomas More House of Prayer in Cranberry, Pa. Any high school girl with a mature spirituality who wants a deep experience of Christ is welcome to participate in the weekend, which will include Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, confession, rosary, games, presentations, small group discussion, private reflection, and good food. Participants must be pre-registered.

For registration information, contact Kathleen Peterson at 814-824-1218 or kpeterson@ErieRCD.org, or Jennifer Durney at 814-824-1219 or jdurney@ErieRCD.org.

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PHOTOS from AROUND the DIOCESE

Email news items to: FaithLife@ErieRCD.org

Check out more photos at
www.ErieRCD.org/atd.htm



Secular Franciscans meet for Transitus



WATERFORD—Secular Franciscans met at All Saints Church in Waterford in October for the Transitus, a devotion remembering the passing of St. Francis of Assisi from earthly life to life with God. Pictured are members of the Canticle of the Sun Fraternity and from St. Peter Fraternity. In the first row, from left, are: Divie Youngberg, Mary Nelson, Donna Roberti and Mary Lou Kreider. In the second row, from left, are: Barbara Fish, Burton Fish, Candy Henry and Pat Lewis. In the third row, from left, are: Paul Tarasovitch, Carol Onuffer and Mary Stewart. Standing, from left, are: Chris Zurawski, Dail and Roger Vervold, Nancy Mattson and Harriet McClellan.

Our Lady's Christian students raise money for Neighborhood Art House



ERIE—Students of Our Lady's Christian School at St. Jude the Apostle Parish raised \$278.25 from a recent dress-down day at the school. Eighth-graders Lauren Vargo and Elizabeth Keating presented a check to Benedictine Sister Annette Marshall, far left, executive director of the Neighborhood Art House in Erie. Also pictured is Benedictine Sister Katherine Horan, OLCs science teacher.

Knights sell 1,000 dinners at barbecue



HOUTZDALE—The Houtzdale Knights of Columbus Council #10376 recently held a two-day barbecue fundraiser at which more than 1,000 dinners were sold at Delgrossi Park in Tipton, Pa. Pictured in the front row, from left, are: Jimmy Belella and Mike Fetchu. In the second row, from left, are: Rick Bannon, James Tarbay, Mark Dugan, Frank Belella, John Tarbay, Bob Yebernetsky, George Rosenberg and Al Gmerek.



BEST VALUE NORTH REGION
U.S. News & World Report
2016-2017



COASTAL CLEANUP



ERIE—Seventh- and eighth-graders from St. George School in Erie on Sept. 17 participated for the fifth year in a row in the Coastal Cleanup of Lake Erie. Students and advisers traveled to Avonia Beach in Fairview, but rain and lightning cut short the outdoor cleanup. The group, instead, cleaned the event building's floors, walls and windows.

ON THE ICE



ERIE—The Gannon University hockey team recently challenged the Kennedy Catholic hockey team to a friendly scrimmage at the Erie Insurance Arena. As president of the Shenango Valley Catholic School System in Hermitage and head coach of Gannon hockey, Father Jason Glover enjoyed merging his two assignments on the ice. Pictured is a group shot of both teams.

MEETING GOD IN THE FOREST



KANE—Parishioners of all ages from St. Callistus Church in Kane took a hike, called "Faith 'n Forest," on Oct. 9 after the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Participants shared lunch and broke into groups for two different hiking experiences. The hikes were initiated and led by parishioners who work as foresters. They shared quotes from Pope Francis' apostolic letter on the environment and talked about how they meet God in their work as good stewards of the earth.

Crawford County first responders recognized for their commitment



MEADVILLE—The Catholic community of Meadville gathered at St. Mary of Grace Church for a special Blue Mass in honor of the men and women who serve as first responders in the community.

Participating were representatives from Vernon Township Police, Meadville Fire and Rescue, Vernon Township Fire Department, Crawford County commissioners, as well as family and friends. Following the Mass, St. Mary of Grace held a reception.

Members of the Vernon Township Police and the Meadville Fire and Rescue Department pose for this photo with Father Tom Trocchio, parochial vicar of St. Brigid Parish, Meadville, at far right, Deacon Todd Summers, kneeling at far left, and Deacon Ken Reisenweber, standing in the center.

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- \$2.00/ Game
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- 2 Coverall Games
- 3-on Cards

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