**News from the STA Mass communities:**

7:15 Daily Mass: Deacon Carl Bunje has been either in the hospital or in the Lytton Gardens rehab center for the past month. We all are praying for him.

7:30 Sunday Mass: This early Mass is popular with folks who like to get an early start on their Sunday activities.

8:45 Sunday Mass: The TMC Liturgy Committee is planning the regular Christmas Eve Mass at 6:00 pm; there will be no 8:45 Mass on Christmas morning.

10:30 Sunday Mass: Bass singers are needed for the community choir. See choir director Paul Prochaska after Mass.

12:00 Sunday Mass: Christmas Eve Midnight Mass at 12:00 midnight with carols at 11:30 pm, & Christmas Mass in the Day at 12:00 noon; both celebrated by Fr. Anselm Ramelo, OP, including Gregorian chant & a polyphonic ordinary.

12:15 Daily Mass: Downtown workers are frequently in attendance at this Mass.

**Watching the altar grow:**

Work on the church altar is in full swing, as a peak through the plastic curtain can tell.

Two Armenian craftsmen have installed the hardwood flooring on the main step of the altar—working Saturdays and nights to get it done. Stain has been applied and buffed. Carpet has been laid on the second step of the altar—a temporary tan carpet until the painting, refinishing of pews and the rest of the floor are done. The “real” carpet—in a deep claret color—will come later. City inspection is expected Monday, then final cleanup. The curtain should come down on Wednesday.

The Advent wreath looks slightly surreal in front of the plastic curtain which separates the altar work area from the main sanctuary of the church. The various Eucharistic ministers are managing to line up and distribute the Body and Blood with their usual grace and attention, in spite of the cramped quarters around the altar. The congregations are adapting to the reduced number of pews and tight communion lines—some even calling it cozy with the altar so close to the people.

Many thanks to Jan Dedek and July Foley for being the point persons for the construction workers.

**STA Site Committee plans:**

**Monthly Meeting:**
2nd Thursday of the month

**Next regular Site meeting:**
Thursday, December 13, 2012
7:30 pm, Thomas House Library

**Agenda (tentative):**
- Report on homeless forum
- Basement hall enhancements
- Creche for STA?

**Monthly newsletter:**
Sunday before 2nd Thursday

**Editor:** Kay Williams, 650-328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net

**Homeless guests and needs discussed Dec. 5:**

As winter weather descends, there have been more unhoused folks using the STA ramps, carport and church porch for nighttime shelter. The Site Committee hosted a meeting on December 5 in the Thomas House basement hall at which Heiri Schuppisser, Homeless Outreach Specialist with Momentum for Mental Health, discussed his work with the homeless population of Santa Clara County, especially with the mentally ill. Joel Wolfberg, a retired psychologist who volunteers with Heiri, also shared his thoughts on the ways help for homeless folks is most effective. Both Heiri and Joel emphasized that their job is to establish trust with homeless persons and, as a result of that trust, help them regain housing. Heiri strives to link the homeless person with solutions to meet his or her needs. Once a person is housed, social services can be available to him or her—because social workers can locate him/her. But it can take years to get a person off the streets. Consistently showing up for the homeless person, cementing trust and engaging personally, is the key. Joel said, “I can give a hand up, not a hand out.”

The Site Committee is planning another meeting with Heiri and Joel in a few weeks, aiming for an action plan for STA Site.
NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHURCH SITE COMMITTEE

751 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:
Mike McMahon          Bea Peterson            Patti Robison
Anna Jaklitsch            Bill Mahrt                 Bob March
Philip Boudart            Lorraine Dabney       Judy Foley
Ted Baer                   Bob Barron               Helen Baumann
Mario Veloro Kay Williams and occasional others

Mission Statement: The Site Committee for St. Thomas Aquinas Church works to encourage community-building within our six individual Mass communities, among our Mass communities, and within the larger parish community. We do this by enhancing our liturgies, exercising responsible stewardship of our facilities, and working to improve communications at all levels of our parish community.

Site committee meetings are (usually) held the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Library of the Thomas House. All are welcome, but if you cannot attend, send questions or suggestions to Kay Williams, 328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net.

Parish pathways:

Taizé Prayer service Dec. 20, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Our Lady of the Rosary Church:

This is an opportunity to take a few moments for yourself and for your soul. Taizé (tay-zay) Prayer uses the psalms, scripture, songs and silence. It uses music, chants, prayer and meditation to promote a sense of inner peace. The Taizé music, songs and chants, are simple to learn and sing. This form of prayer service originated in the small town of Taizé, France in 1940 and is ecumenical in origin. Fr. Randy says: “Bring a friend for a personal encounter with Jesus”. (Our Lady of the Rosary Church is at 3233 Cowper, P.A.)

Update on Fr. Kiriti in Kenya, Dec. 16:
Hear news of Fr. Daniel Kiriti in his new parish in Kosetel, East Pokot, Kenya, from Margo McAuliffe, who spent the summer in Kenya, working at St. Francis Xavier Secondary School for Girls in Naivasha, Kenya. Margo visited for several days with Fr. Kiriti in August and is eager to share her impressions of the Pokot people and the challenges facing Fr. Kiriti in this remote rural area of Kenya.

In addition to hearing Margo’s comments on Kosetei, you will have an opportunity to make a donation and receive handmade Kenyan crafts in return—the items are from the Maasai Market in Nairobi and other places, brought back by Margo as part of the Kenya Help fundraising program. Kenya Help is a non-profit organization started by Margo for the purpose of supporting women and youth in Kenya. St. Francis School was built with the help of many STA parishioners and is completed; funds raised now are used for scholarships for needy Kenyan girls.

For more information, contact Margo at 650-322-0821 or by email at margo@kenyahelp.us.

From the church steps:

Giving Tree & the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Toy Collection:
The Giving Tree for Christmas is up in the back of the church. Please take a tag or two, buy the toy and put it under the tree -- unwrapped. The toys collected are distributed to children in East Palo Alto who might otherwise go without. This is a long-standing tradition in our parish, sponsored by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and we appreciate your continued support. Thanks!

Faith Formation assistant needed:
There are three paid positions available in the Parish Faith Formation program, with the possibility of combining two into one for additional hours:
1. Administrative assistant to work in the office during the week keeping records of faith formation program for children. Good organizational and computer skills required. 10-12 hours per week.
2. Site Coordinator for OLR - Open classrooms and assist catechists, children, and parents as needed for Sunday morning classes. 3-4 hours on Sunday
3. Site Coordinator for St. Albert the Great - Open and close classrooms and assist catechists, children, and parents as needed for Sunday morning classes. 3-4 hours on Sunday
If you are interested in any of these positions, or if you know of someone who might be interested, please contact Susan Olsen in the Pastoral Center (650-494-2496). Ext. 25

Latin class changes meeting night:
Kevin Rossiter’s twice-monthly Latin class has changed its meeting nights to the first and third Mondays in the Thomas House. If you would like to refresh—or learn—Latin by using the readings of the next Sunday as the text, contact Kevin at respondeo@hotmail.com.

More from Heiri and Joel on the homeless (see page 1):
■ Heiri always meets a homeless person on his/her eye level—never talking down.
■ Since the closing of SRO (single room occupancy) housing in Palo Alto (Palo Alto Hotel, Craig Hotel, Casa Olga), more people are living on the streets.
■ At the request of merchants, Palo Alto police roust unhoused persons sleeping in downtown shop doorways or city parking garages, thereby pushing them south toward churches like STA.
■ The Downtown Streets Team works effectively to end homelessness.
■ Instead of giving cash to homeless beggars, Joel gives socks or cigarettes—without conditions or judgment (he can’t stand seeing a man smoking another person’s cigarette butt).