



From The Heart

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Oberlin, Ohio

ADVENT/ CHRISTMAS 2016

Highlights !!

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No one knows the actual day that Jesus was born. No date is given in the Bible, so why do we celebrate it on the 25th of December? The first recorded date of the Nativity being celebrated on that date was in 336 AD during the time of the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine. A few years later, Pope Julius I officially declared that the birth of Jesus would be commemorated on December 25th.

There are a number of theories as to why that date was chosen. A very early Christian tradition said that on March 25th the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to be his mother. When they extended it out 9 months, they had a fitting date on which to celebrate our Savior's birth.

However, it's more likely that this day was chosen because the Church was trying to Christianize a popular pagan Roman festival, *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* (the Birth of the Unconquered Sun). This was held on December 25th when the Romans commemorated the winter solstice. This is the astronomical event when there is the shortest time between the sun rising and the sun setting, the time when the days start to become longer and the nights grow shorter. Since it meant that winter was over and spring was coming, the Romans worshipped the sun's triumph over the darkness of winter. As a result, on December 25th they celebrated the 'birthday' of the sun god Mithra. Standing up to this pagan feast, the early Christians were boldly giving this festival a new meaning, a celebration of the birth of the Son of God, the true 'Unconquered Son', the true Light of the World. All this means is that we don't know the actual date Jesus was born. But that's not as important as knowing that on a day about 2,000 years ago heaven met earth and the world was changed forever. **December 25 may be an arbitrary day but it is a holy day when we commemorate when God so loved the world that He sent us his only begotten Son. And that is truly a day to celebrate!**

Fr. Cole

Merry Memories

St. Nicholas Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas ... all these bring joyful memories for many – hopefully most – of us. Several people have been kind enough to share some of those memories for publication here. We hope you'll enjoy reading them and that they'll help evoke some forgotten memories of your own.

Sacred Heart Refugee Sponsorship/Peace & Justice Committee Update (11/14/16)

Previous articles introduced our evolving **Parish Refugee Project**. The initial team of close to a dozen parishioners has participated in trainings on the global refugee situation, the local role of our parish sponsorship, national VIRTUS training and background checks to ensure the safety of all. Our primary goal with this apostolate is to be a good and welcoming friend to these refugee families and make their integration into our culture as smooth as possible.

We will be involved in a three-step process: 1) Catholic Charities will obtain a place for the family to live on the west side of Cleveland. We will furnish this dwelling through donations. Lori Taylor has already been collecting basic furnishings and supplies and will inform our parish community when we know more specifics about the needs of the family. 2) We will greet the family at the airport and help them move into their new home. 3) As the new family begins English classes, seeks employment and community resources, we will meet with them regularly to help them practice their English skills and mutually seek a better understanding of our culture.

We will probably receive our family after the New Year though it is possible things will develop more quickly than that. Over the past few months there have been articles on refugees in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. (Just put Plain Dealer and refugee articles in a search engine. The October 23rd article is very informative.) They are good sources of information on the vetting process and the makeup of refugees in both our country and our area.

Ted Chmura

Merry Memories of Christmas Past

I remember all of us – mom, brother, sister, and I – would sing carols at the piano. On nights when we were too rambunctious, mom would put us to bed and play carols quietly until we went to sleep.

Christmas Traditions: Making A Joyful Noise

As the daughter of our parish's choir director, many of my fondest Christmas memories center around contributing musically to midnight (and often, also, 10 a.m.) Mass. My dad invited young musicians from the parish to share their talents in the celebration of Mass at Christmas, and it was truly a gift for a young person to be able to participate in such a significant way.

Some of my most treasured memories are of several Christmas Eve Masses during which my five sisters and I sang as the "Drda Sextet." In the still of the church after Communion, when the creaks and groans of the wooden pews had diminished and the last kneeler had been put back into place, my sisters and I joined our voices in three-part harmony to sing "Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming." Some years a capella, some years accompanied by organ, our voices floated from the choir loft to settle on the congregation below – a mantle of peace, hope and joy on those, the holiest of nights.

Maria Mutnansky

Parishioner Spotlight: Bob Wohleber



Robert Anthony Wohleber was born in 1924 at his parents' home, his delivery aided by a midwife who was his aunt, because Allen Hospital was not yet in existence. His home was part of a familial enclave of farms belonging to family, including uncles and in-laws, located on Butternut Ridge northeast of the City of Oberlin. He was the oldest of three children born to Matthias and Rosina Wohleber, faithful members of Sacred Heart Church. His siblings were Harold and Emma, both of whom are now deceased. For six years, Bob attended the one-room schoolhouse on Oberlin Road and then transferred to the town school.

Bob spent his early years working on the family farm which, in addition to vegetables, had horses, cows, and pigs. These were Depression times. Money was scarce, but the Wohlebers were better off than most because of the food they grew and animals that could be slaughtered. The vegetables were sold to the A&P store in Oberlin, as well as to other outlets. Their Model A truck was a familiar sight around town.

Bob was drafted for service in WWII and trained in Alabama. After that, it was a long train ride to Seattle. From there, he embarked for fighting in Japan. He was blessed, and the ship was in an uproar when news of the atom bomb was disclosed and their services were no longer needed.

After returning home, Bob was hired by Oberlin College to work in its maintenance department. Originally hired as a temporary, he retired after 42 years of service. Interestingly enough, at one time, three Wohlebers were working for the college: Harold, Bob, and Bruce, Bob's nephew, who is still employed there as a safety & security officer.

Bob was 42 when he married his wife, Irene. The ceremony was at Irene's church -- St. Mary's -- in Wakeman. [As an aside, the late Father Bonnell, our former pastor, was instrumental in helping this marriage come about, having arranged the introductions.] Bob and Irene were married 43 years -- until Irene's death in 2007. Bob and Irene, who was a Matus, always attended the huge Matus family Christmas party, which was held in the parish education building for over 150 family members. Bob has one daughter, Donna (Frank), and two granddaughters, Julia and Genna.

Bob has always been an avid football fan, and in earlier times would join friends for a weekend in Columbus to see Ohio State play. He still watches the games on television.

Bob played his part in the Sacred Heart chicken dinners, helping set up tables, running the bingo game, and so on. His mother was the chief cook and solicited donations of chickens, pies, and other needed items.

In the vestibule at the south entrance of Sacred Heart is a plaque listing those who made major donations to the building fund for our current church. On it you will see the name of Robert Wohleber. We thank you, Bob, for that contribution and for your continued membership in our parish. Happy (belated) November 24th birthday, and may you enjoy continued good health.

Joe McCormick

"It is Christmas every time you let God love others through you."
-Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Front Row:

Andrew Streator.....Noelle Ignagni.....Vincenzo Ignagni.....Pablo Pineda....Rosalie Turner.....Emma James.....Grace James....William Muzilla

Middle Row:

Jennifer Urbansky.....Leah Bratton.....Blaise Ignagni.....Jonathan Turner...Carter Grude...Abigail Lefebvre...Veronica Janosik.....Andrew Muzilla

Back Row:

Nickholas Ignagni....Shawny Hess....Samuel Thompson....Leah Drost....Matthew A. Lee, Matthew D. Lee....Jack Laird....Alexander Rucker

And Fr. Cole.....Abbot Gary Hoover.... Deacon Tom Daw

Merry Memories: St. Nicholas Day

We always celebrated St. Nicholas Day. All the kids put their shoes out the night of December 5th. In the morning, they'd clamber out of bed to see what kinds of goodies were stuffed inside them. There'd always be candy, and the boys would usually have one or two new Matchbox cars; their sister, Barbie clothes. I'm happy my married offspring continue the tradition with their own children.

Meet Your Ushers and Collection Counters, Part 2

In the last issue of the newsletter, you were introduced to some of the ushers and collection counters for the 10:00 a.m. Mass. There are two more familiar faces who regularly serve as ushers on Sunday mornings: Joseph Chappo and Ethel Muzilla. We'll get to know them a little more in this issue, and then we'll continue this series in the next issue with those who serve at the Saturday evening Mass.



Joe Chappo has been a member of Sacred Heart parish for over 40 years. He has been an "off and on usher" for most of the time but has served full-time the past three years. He says he started ushering by substituting whenever needed, especially during the summer months when the regular ushers were on vacation, and eventually he was drafted to fill a slot on Sunday mornings.

Joe worked as a structural engineer with Teller and Associates in Westlake, retiring three years ago. One of his notable projects was being involved in the design and preparation phase for the Journey to Atlantis ride for Sea World in Florida, Texas, and California. Joe says that although the roller coaster ride differed somewhat in each location, the same name for the ride was used in each park. Another notable accomplishment for Joe was being the lead engineer for the addition to the terminal at the Pittsburgh International Airport. He also worked on a couple of additions to Southwest General Hospital, but says that was "many years ago." One of Joe's last projects before he retired was working on the new Midview Middle School.

Joe has three adult children, two daughters and a son, who all reside in the area. Now that he is retired, he spends time enjoying his hobby of model railroading. He collects and works with HO gauge trains. His interest in trains has been a lifelong passion; he grew up in Elyria and says he remembers begging his parents to go to the Abbe Road crossing so he could watch the trains there.

Ethel Muzilla is another longtime member of Sacred Heart parish. She was originally a member from 1970 to 1976 and then returned to the parish in 1994. Like some of the other ushers, Ethel was drafted by Ron Pickworth's father. Ethel said he had asked her several times to become an usher, but she declined each time. However, he was persistent until, "One day, he just set the basket by the pew and walked away. I had no choice!"

Ethel's husband, Richard, passed away in 2008. She has 5 adult children and 17 grandchildren. Two of her children live in the area, but the others are spread across the country and even across the Atlantic! Her son, Greg, and his family live close by and are also members of Sacred Heart. Another son, Jon, and his family live in Rocky River. Son Mark and family live in California, while daughter Amy and family live in New Jersey. Finally, Ethel's son, Kevin, and his family reside in England. Despite the distance challenges, it is clear that family is important to Ethel. Three days a week she helps out with the grandchildren who live nearby, and she also travels several times a year to visit the out-of-state family members. Ethel says she wants to thank her fellow ushers for filling in for her when she is "flying around the country to visit with family. You are all great!"



Ethel is a retired teacher. She started teaching before she was married, then, after having five children, returned to teaching in 1972 for Firelands Schools. She retired in 1994 but couldn't quite leave teaching behind. She began a second career teaching piano and also volunteered with 4th graders at St. Joseph's in Amherst from 2010 to 2015, when her grandchildren were attending there. When she's not with her grandchildren or traveling, Ethel takes care of a large country yard and enjoys reading.

Kathy Gulish

Traditions: Christmas in Hungary

In Hungary, we celebrated the birth of Jesus during Christmas Eve. There was an air of excitement as our parents decorated the Christmas tree behind closed doors. When, late evening, the door was opened, we were surprised and thrilled to enter and see the tree aglow, and the presents that the Baby Jesus brought us placed under the tree.

On December 6, St. Nicholas Day, Santa Claus [St. Nicholas] brought candy, nuts, and oranges for us, the kids – if we had been good. The night before, we placed our thoroughly cleaned shoes outside the front door with high hopes of being rewarded for being good kids. Invariably, we were judged good and happily ate the goodies Santa Claus left us in our shoes.

My family continued these traditions even after we immigrated to our new home, the United States.

Agnes Bacon

ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is part of our long-standing Catholic tradition. However, the actual origins are uncertain. There is evidence of pre-Christian Germanic peoples using wreathes with lit candles during the cold and dark December days as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended-sunlight days of Spring. In Scandinavia during Winter, lighted candles were placed around a wheel, and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn “the wheel of the earth” back toward the sun to lengthen the days and restore warmth.

By the Middle Ages, the Christians adapted this tradition and used Advent wreathes as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. After all, Christ is “the Light that came into the world” to dispel the darkness of sin and to radiate the truth and love of God (cf. John 3:19-21). By 1600, both Catholics and Lutherans had more formal practices surrounding the Advent wreath. The symbolism of the Advent wreath is beautiful. The wreath is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. Even these evergreens have a traditional meaning which can be adapted to our faith: The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; pine, holly, and yew, immortality; and cedar, strength and healing. Holly also has a special Christian symbolism: The prickly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns, and one English legend tells of how the cross was made of holly. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. Any pine cones, nuts, or seedpods used to decorate the wreath also symbolize life and resurrection. All together, the wreath of evergreens depicts the immortality of our soul and the new, everlasting life promised to us through Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who entered our world becoming true man and who was victorious over sin and death through His own passion, death, and resurrection.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. A tradition is that each week represents one thousand years, to sum to the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the Birth of the Savior. Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord’s first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

By REV. WILLIAM SAUNDERS

Merry Memories: Christmas in Mexico

In Mexico, we celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve. The tradition is to cook a traditional meal (bacalao, romeritos with mole and potatoes (delicious and very Mexican), tamales, pavo/turkey, ponche (a fruit punch different from the version in the U.S.), and more on the 24th and serve it between 11 p.m. and midnight.

Families go to church before dinner is served for the “Misa de Gallo.” [“misa”/ Mass, “gallo”/rooster] The gallo/rooster sings at dawn; the Mass is around midnight, rather late, or quite early in the morning for that matter, so the name “Misa de Gallo” refers to the very early first hour of the morning when the service takes place.] When the clock strikes midnight there’s a toast and everybody wishes everybody a Merry Christmas. There are hugs, kisses, tears of joy and some sad ones for the loved ones who have departed. If there are presents, they are given earlier in the evening. Children will go to bed then, since the presents from Santa Claus will arrive soon.

Santa Claus is not a Mexican tradition; he came to Mexico from the United States. Television and commercial advertising brought him. There are places in the country where the Mexican tradition is still observed. It’s not Santa who brings presents to the children, it’s “el Niño Jesús”/Baby Jesus. In many households there is a nativity scene rather than a Christmas tree (which is not a Mexican tradition, either, but was adopted from the U.S.A. just in the same way Santa was). Many homes have both, and many set up just the nativity scene. No milk and cookies are left for Santa. The children wake up early on the 25th to see what Santa or Baby Jesus (according to the beliefs of families) brought them, then they play with their presents all day long. There’s no special meal on the 25th; the big celebration was the evening before.

New Year’s Eve is celebrated pretty much in the same way as Christmas Eve is, with the big meal around 11:00 p.m. When midnight strikes, a toast and hugs, kisses, and best wishes for the new year.

Then, on January 5th -- the tradition of the three wise men who come to bring presents to the children, representing the wise men who brought presents to Baby Jesus. Early in the evening, families gather to have Rosca de Reyes, a traditional pastry, with hot chocolate. Children go to bed early, but they make sure they leave their shoes outside the bedroom, and get up early on the 6th to see their presents.

MANY poor children in Mexico don’t get presents at all. Many don’t even have shoes to leave by their room door which is non-existent.

My siblings and I were very fortunate to get toys and candy, thanks to my very hard-working parents and one uncle who helped Santa and Baby Jesus bring them to us. I can still see my very happy face when one Christmas I saw a beautiful doll and many Tin Larin and Almonris chocolate bars, my favorites back then, just for me!!! My siblings were as happy as I with their dolls and cars and many chocolate bars, just for them! Thanks, Mom and Dad and Uncle Ricardo! Que en paz descansen./May your souls rest in peace.

ART AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

You may notice a varying collection of art and design at Sacred Heart during our liturgical celebrations. The impact may range from subtle, almost unnoticed, to large festive arrangements around the Easter and Christmas liturgies. Members of this committee create an atmosphere that is visually pleasing and conducive to a reflective spiritual and liturgical experience. They decorate the church for the various liturgical seasons as well as for special events such as First Communion and Confirmation. Their work is intended to inspire the thought in all who enter the Church building, “[How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!” (Psalm 84:1)



ally pleasing atmosphere.

You may have noticed red tongues of fire overhead as the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost Sunday. Not all their activities are so dramatic; the altar cloth used at each Mass is of no less concern, as it is most visible and subject to general wear and changes to reflect the appropriate liturgical season. The altar cloths we use today were handmade by those on the committee. The members rely on a number of resources to fulfill the various functions. Some materials are available at the church, and they have access to a number of floral suppliers. Most importantly, they have their own ingenuity. It was noted the crucifix above the altar was not as visually prominent as it needed to be, and at that point the ingenuity engine kicked in. Committee members noted the large wall behind the altar absorbed any contrasts the crucifix had; the solution was to place a starburst behind the crucifix in the colors of the liturgical season. Problem solved!



Art and environment also incorporates the history of Sacred Heart parish into our liturgies. The nativity set used during Christmas season, with the exception of the manger itself, has been a part of Sacred Heart parish for 50 years or so, with the archangel figure coming from the original Sacred Heart church.

While the committee usually has some flexibility to complete their tasks over a few days, Christmas and Easter are especially challenging due to the scale of the changes and the short time in which the transformation must be completed. Kathy Spencer, committee head, Carol Lalonde, Elaine Ladina, and other members call on volunteers to assist during the busiest times. If you are interested in becoming a member of this group or are uncertain but would like to try it out, please contact Kathy Spencer, 440-775-1179 or email Kathryn.Spencer1881@gmail.com.

Brian Barbuto

Merry Memories : A Different Christmas Tradition

Growing up in our house, there was no emphasis on the religious side of Christmas, but we knew that we celebrated because it was Jesus' birthday. We knew about the baby and about Joseph and Mary. My parents had a fancy party for their closest friends on Christmas Eve. No children allowed. We stayed in our bedrooms anticipating an early morning of opening gifts. My mother and older brother always decorated the tree beautifully. Our dad bought little bags of fresh chestnuts and, as in the song, roasted them on an open fire (or at least on the hearth next to the open fire). Yum. Christmas morning, he built a warmth-giving fire into which we tossed the crumpled up wrapping paper, all of us loving how it made the flames turn color.

“For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.” (Is. 9:6)

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.” (Jn. 1:14)

Merry Memories of Christmas

We often had a fresh Christmas tree, purchased right after Thanksgiving so we could enjoy it all through the season. We were pretty poor, but our grandparents would give our mother money to help buy presents. Mom had us brainwashed into believing that even new underwear was a great gift! Before we went to bed, the stockings (handmade by a great-aunt) were put up and cookies and milk were left out for Santa Claus. The tree lights were left on all night. When we woke up oh-so-early, we found piles of gifts (including brightly-wrapped underwear) under the candy cane-covered tree. Skipping Mass on Christmas was never an option, and mom trying to take us to midnight Mass didn't quite work out, so – whining and complaining – off we went to church in the morning, leaving our brand-new toys behind!

PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

There are people who belong to a parish who come for Mass on weekends, then go away until the following weekend. Some of them have good reasons they can't do more than that. At Sacred Heart, we also have many parishioners who are here, not only for the weekend liturgies, but who also serve in one or more ministries and who seem to give their all to making this a better place ... a better example of Christian generosity ... who epitomize the concept of giving of one's time, talent, and treasure.

Meet the Kubickis: Jack Sr., Sue, Jack Jr., Christopher, and Carrie.

Jack came from Newburgh Heights, Sue from Sidney (Ohio). They met at Put-In-Bay, married, lived in Cleveland and Avon Lake and, happily for us, are now living just minutes away from Sacred Heart. Jack works for dining services at the college and drives school bus in Avon Lake. Previously, he was plant manager and sanitation supervisor at Miceli Cheese and Routh Packing. Sue is an LPN and has been selling Mary Kay products for 22 years. In addition to all this, they operate a mobile catering and pig roasting business called Chubby's.

Jack Jr., Chris, and Carrie were all servers growing up. They were (and still are, to varying degrees) involved with Family Promise and its families. Jack Jr. is a member of parish council, following in the footsteps of both his parents. He and Carrie were both youth representatives on council when they were in high school. Chris helps his dad with church repairs as needed and troubleshoots the pop machine in the education building.

The entire family is involved with church social events. They help as they're able when others come to them in need. They work with our youth during social events to help them with service hours and to help them understand they're valued and needed by the parish.

Jack and Sue have taught PSR about 14 years. Currently Sue has the first grade class and Jack, the third. They're the overall coordinators of Family Promise. Sue is in charge of the parish's social and sunshine committees and is involved with the parish nurse program. Both shop for parish kitchen supplies; both have been Eucharistic ministers.

Their sentiment about all this: "We are very blessed to be a small part of Sacred Heart parish." Would that the rest of us were willing to play such a "small" role in parish life!



*"Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is."
-Irenaeus*

Family Promise

Family Promise was brought to us after members of our peace and justice committee became aware that there were people trying to get the program started in Lorain County. Jack & Sue Kubicki and Tracy & Chuck Leverknight attended a meeting, and Family Promise came to Sacred Heart in March of 2008.

Did you know it takes 60 volunteers each time we host families? People are needed to set up, do laundry, bring food donations, prepare meals, spend time with the families, and take all of it down at the end of the week? We have many volunteers, but as some are no longer able to participate for whatever reason, more are needed to take their places.

Would you be willing to be one of the people who enables this program to continue at Sacred Heart? Volunteers can be any age, but those 16 and older have to be trained. That training is available right here or at the day center next door (in the former rectory) or at any of the other Lorain County churches that host. Non-parishioners are also welcome to volunteer here; they just need to be trained as well. We have whole families that spend time with our Family Promise guests. The children play and talk together, and that distracts from focusing on the current situations some are in.

If you take the training but can't schedule our hosting weeks in, or you just love this kind of service, you're also welcome to volunteer at other churches, just as their volunteers are welcome to help at Sacred Heart.

If you're interested in learning more about this wonderful program, or you want to sign up for training, please call one of the following numbers. Our next hosting opportunity is Christmas week.

Family Promise: 440-774-6743

Jack Kubicki: 216-210-0186

Sue Kubicki: 440-240-3192

"... remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish council meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. At their meetings, they hear news from the pastor, from finance council, spiritual life commission, religious education, youth group, and other ministries and committees. In the past two months, there have been reports and/or discussions on the Grateful Giving program, the success of the ministry fair, discernment of new members, and cleaning the church before Christmas and Easter liturgies. The spiritual life commission is trying to find ways to increase fellowship among parishioners. IHN will host Christmas week. The 2017 parish picnic will be held June 18th at the New Russia Township Lodge on Butternut Ridge following the outdoor Mass at church. There was some consideration given to changing next year's Christmas Mass times. At the December meeting, the council will bid farewell to outgoing members Connie Loflin and Jack Secrist and will welcome two new members, Sharon Miller and Dan Steinacker.

A big Thank You to everyone who has submitted an article or helped in any way to produce this newsletter.

We also want to thank the good folks at Murray Ridge Center and Murray Ridge Production Center for preparing the previous three copies of the newsletter. They provided invaluable help in getting the newsletter up and running and we are greatly in their debt.

This issue has been printed by Allan Kenard Printing, thus you will see some changes — it is in color and formatted slightly differently.

Sacred Heart Parish
410 West Lorain Street
Oberlin, OH 44074-1002

Please let us know if you have comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter. We would really appreciate feedback of any kind and would like to know if people are reading this newsletter.

You can send your comments to EDITOR at :

sacredheart1newsletter@gmail.com

Feel free to submit your comments, suggestions for future items or an article of general interest to our parishioners. This newsletter goes to all registered parishioners and is way to reach out to the entire Sacred Heart community and hopefully beyond.

Thank you, we would love to hear from you.