

INCARNATION PARISH

PALOS HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS

OPEN HEARTS AWARD ENTRY
AUGUST 1, 2012



The beautiful stained glass shown above is featured in Incarnation Parish's Adoration Chapel.

ABOUT INCARNATION PARISH

On June 24, 1962, Incarnation parish celebrated its first mass and founded a new parish community. Today, 50 years later, Incarnation remains a vibrant parish serving the south suburban areas of Palos Heights, Crestwood, and Alsip, Illinois. Reverend Ronald J. Mass has been pastor of Incarnation parish since 1997.

In its 50th anniversary year, Incarnation parish identified an inclusion representative and established a Pathways to Worship committee to coordinate access and inclusion efforts in the parish.

CHURCH EXTERIOR

All church entrances are accessible.



The north entrance of the church features a covered drop-off area.



The entrance to the Adoration Chapel is also accessible.



Accessible parking is available near all church entrances.



Sidewalks and entrances feature marked curb cuts



CHURCH INTERIOR

The vestibule is accessible from exterior entrances.



Pew cut-outs are available at the front and back of the church.



A section with moveable chairs offers a variety of seating options.



Both sides of the altar have handrails and non-slip taping on the steps to provide visual contrast.



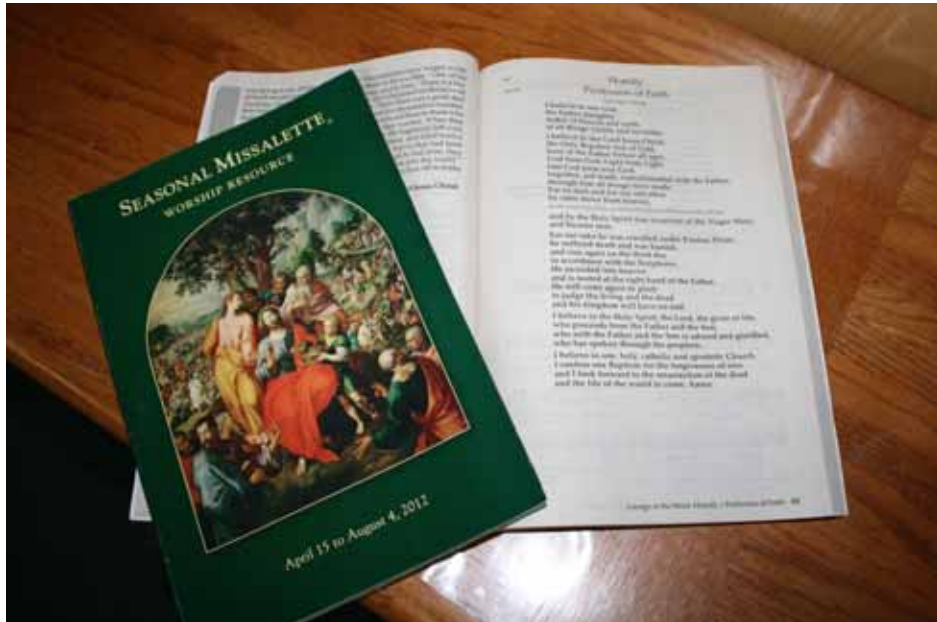
CHURCH RESTROOMS

The church restrooms feature accessible stalls and sinks, all installed at ADA recommended sizes and heights.



WORSHIP AIDS

Several years ago, the parish started purchasing a large type version of the missalette.



The parish also has assistive listening devices. Incarnation's Pathways to Worship committee will oversee distribution of the devices to increase utilization in the parish.



PARISH MEETING SPACES

Sports games and parish functions are held in the Bernardin Center. The exterior entrances are accessible. The interior also has a ramped stage to ensure that all parishioners can participate in parish events.



The parish rectory and office features a ramped rear entrance for easy access.



INCARNATION SCHOOL

Incarnation School is fully accessible, with all rooms located on one level. Students with disabilities are included in the school and religious education programs.



INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

Parishioners at Incarnation demonstrate an inclusive spirit by making it possible for people of all abilities to participate in all aspects of parish life.

Adults with disabilities living in a nearby group home are welcomed into worship as they regularly attend mass at Incarnation parish. When one of the residents expressed interest in attending the parish's annual dinner dance, but was unable to afford a ticket, parishioners stepped forward to sponsor his ticket. Parishioners also arranged for his transportation to and from the event, he had a wonderful time, and all were enriched by the experience.

In religious education, volunteer catechists provide an adapted curriculum to students with disabilities preparing to receive the sacraments.

The Incarnation athletic program organizes a soccer partnership with nearby Elim Christian School for children and adults with disabilities. Youth from Incarnation's soccer teams play games annually with youth from Elim Christian School. Through these games, youth from both schools learn about teamwork, Christian values, and acceptance of differences.



Soccer photos by Art Vassy,
Courtesy of Sun-Times Media /
Southtown-Star

INCLUSION AWARENESS DAY 2012

In celebration of Inclusion Awareness Day, Incarnation's Pathways to Worship committee will be coordinating the following activities on October 13 and 14, 2012.

- In conjunction with Inclusion Awareness Day, the parish has designated October 13 and 14 Human Concerns weekend. As part of the Human Concerns Commission, the Pathways to Worship committee will have a table in the vestibule following all weekend masses with information about the committee. In addition to advertising the parishes' accessible features, the committee will be showing the Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors video.
- Parish teens will distribute Prayer for Awareness prayer cards before all masses.
- The Pathways to Worship committee will distribute an accessibility survey during all masses to further assess the needs of the parish.

FUTURE PLANS FOR ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Incarnation's Pathways to Worship committee conducted a thorough facilities survey to evaluate the accessibility of the campus. Installing an automatic door opener at the exterior entrance of the church was identified as a priority project. Funds received from an Open Hearts Awards grant would be used to defray the cost of this modification. The parish is currently in the process of receiving quotes for the installation of automatic door openers.