Christmas 2020 at St. Peter Parish Coplay

Work on decorating the inside of the church is lead by Mike and Beverly Sobchak and a team of 6 or 7 other volunteers. It involves approximately 140 man hours over a two week period to set up the nativity scene and decorations inside the church. This year the group started on 12/8 (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) and finished by 12/19 (Gaudete Sunday). Of course, take down and storage for next year involves a similar amount of hours.

Since Christmas of 2000, our nativity scene features 27 inch Fontanini figurines. The House of Fontanini is located in Italy and all figurines are hand painted. We currently have 17 Fontanini figures in our nativity scene. It also includes indigenous trees and vegetation that grow in the Holy Land, a cave rather than a stable, a waterfall, stream, the star of Bethlehem and a starry sky. Our Fontanini nativity scene has been recognized by Roman Inc., Bloomingdale, IL, the US distributor of Fontanini.

Besides the nativity scene there are 4-foot lighted angels draped in gold fabric at each stained glass window, two angels with motorized wings on the alter surrounded by white and red poinsettias, 4 large lighted wreaths in the sanctuary area, along with traditional 'TANNENBAUM' Christmas trees.

The exterior church lighting is decorated by a different crew of workers headed by Jim Semler and Tom McMullen. We also have a life sized Nativity Scene provided by the borough of Coplay in front of our Heritage Center building (the old convent). The life sized version took the place of the church's more modestly sized nativity scene.

2020 will be known as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Mass was waived by Bishop Alfred Schlert in order to control the spread of the disease and to protect those most vulnerable. Mask wearing inside the church was required, no hymnals or missalettes were in the pews. The ushers wore sterilized gloves and sterilized the pews after each mass. There were no altar servers and no choir was allowed. It was a subdued celebration when compared with other years; however, people attended in person, viewed Mass on-line or on TV. Due to limited seating, tickets were required to enter the church.