Residents seek solace in prayer

MEDINA — In the office at Medina United Methodist Church, the same scene was being replayed again and again on the TV. The smoke. The plane arrowing into the building. The crumbling towers.

One woman knelt in front of the screen, while the pastor and staff clustered around the desk behind her, their disbelief interrupted only by the telephone.

Down the hall, children romped in the nursery school classrooms, tending to the serious business of play, blissfully unaware of the unfolding tragedies.

"People have been calling, asking if we are still holding nursery school this afternoon," said the Rev. Dr. David Tennant, pastor of the church, as he hung up the phone.

"I imagine this is how people felt when Pearl Harbor happened," he said.

"This is such a cowardly, senseless act. I really think this will galvanize the Americans. Americans always seem to rise to the occasion. We can be apathetic and complacent at times — we've never had an 'attack' on the continental U.S. — but this is just like Pearl Harbor. When we get through this, there will be anger."

As government services and buildings throughout the United States shut down, the churches and temples opened their doors, scheduling special evening prayer services or simply remaining open for those who wanted to find a quiet place to pray.

"My office overlooks the parking lot and people have been coming regularly throughout the day," said the Rev. Mark Hollis, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, a catch in his voice as he spoke. "I've seen several parents take their children to the church after school to pray, and one parishioner told me they joined with their neighbor to say the rosary."

Hollis had been celebrating Mass with third-, fourth- and fifth-graders from St. Francis Xavier School when he heard the news. In his homily, he had talked about how we are children of God.

"We had to ask ourselves, 'How can we be identified as children of God in this situation?' We couldn't be in a better place to respond. So we prayed — for peace, for the people who suffered, for the people who caused the suffering. Violence doesn't solve anything."

Karen Morton, activities director at The Oaks at Medina and a member of Harvest Presbyterian Church, said: "The only appropriate response at this time is to call on God. This is bigger than any of us. We need to turn to God for comfort. He's the only sanctuary."

The red-painted doors of St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Liberty Street stood open, lights burning in the vestibule, a small white sign with the time of their prayer service posted on one side. Just down the street, a similar sign, hastily hand-lettered on yellow paper, was taped to the announcement board outside Medina United Church of Christ Congregational.

In addition, there will be a community prayer service for America at 7:30 p.m. today at York United Methodist Church, 6566 Norwalk Road, York Township.

"We just wanted to get the word out as quickly as possible," said the Rev. Dr. Teresa Dulyea-Parker, pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), who helped organize the service at Medina UCC.

"We felt the need to open our doors," she said. "All of us have our doors open. We're going to pray. I watched the collapse of those buildings, and I asked 'What good can come from this?'"

"One of my church members said she watched it. She told me 'All I can do is leave this in God's hands.' And I realized that's all we can do. People are in shock. We need to come together to support and help each other."

Dulyea-Parker said she listened to the radio to get the news; she couldn't stand watching it.
"There were 50,000 people in those buildings, people who belong to other people ... if they couldn't get out ..." Her voice trailed off before she added that she called the Medina County Chapter of the American Red Cross and the church's denominational offices to see how the churches could respond.

"I can't understand an act of this kind of violence, and I can't understand an act of this kind of violence in the name of God. Anywhere people in the world claim that it was done in the name of God are so wrong, this is so wrong. We keep thinking we're beyond anything like this. The biggest shock is the realization that we're not. If there's any goodness that can come out of this, it's people reaching out to help."

Earlier in the day, the Rev. Dr. Ted Elsenheimer held an impromptu prayer service at Medina General Hospital.

"Ted just happened to be here," said Kimberly Ramsey, secretary in the safety, security and pastoral care offices.

"A lot of people had been stopping in the chaplain's office asking if we were having a service, so we put one together," she said. "People weren't coming looking for answers. They were looking for support. I think everyone felt they just needed some guidance to put things in perspective."

The hospital held a second service in the afternoon, led by the Rev. Jerry Roth, associate pastor at Weymouth Community Church.

"We must not react in haste, we must not react with inaccuracy, we must not react in hatred," Roth said to hospital staff members and patients gathered in conference room No. 3 to pray for those killed and injured, for medical and rescue personnel, for government officials.

"We didn't think this could happen to us as a country," Roth said. "But what I fear most is a hateful, inappropriate response that calls for vengeance. We don't want to see done to anyone else what has been done to our people."

A few offered their own prayers, asking for strength, asking for the right words to give others before wiping away their tears and going back to work.

"This has really moved a lot of people," said Allison Petit, public relations director for the hospital.

"This has come hard on the heels of the county fair disaster, and it's still very fresh for people," she said. "I have lots of friends in New York, and I know people in D.C. I think about the terror of the people on the airplanes, and it's overwhelming. You have to have faith to get through things like this, you can't reason through it."

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Dr. Teresa Dulye-Parker
First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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The Rev. David Wallover, pastor of Harvest Presbyterian Church, said they have a sister congregation on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

"We haven't tried to call them yet to see what we can do to help, but we will, and our national office will coordinate relief efforts," Wallover said. He said their first response was prayer.

"We have to go down on our knees and pray for wisdom and courage. We shouldn't be afraid to respond with strength if that is what wisdom calls for. This was an injustice, but we need to react morally and respond to this not as an act of vengeance, but as an act of justice."

"There's a time to wait and a time to act," Wallover said. "Knowing the difference is the key."
If Harry Potter teaches us anything, it is imagination

Some of the sweetest words a parent ever will hear are, "I love you." In our house, "Will you read to me?" runs a close second.

At bedtime, there is nothing nicer than a small child, blanket trailing behind and favorite book tucked under one arm, clambering into your lap and snuggling against your heart with a contented sigh as you turn the first page.

Both my children loved being read to; we caught them in the cradle with soft-cloth books, graduated to the rhythmic bounce of "Green Eggs and Ham" (from which I can still quote entire passages) and, finally, introduced chapter books that grew increasingly more complex. And although Jamie is now a high-school freshman with time at a premium, we still share books and take turns reading to each other; he reads to me while I drive or prepare supper.

But the little pocket of nighttime, after we close the book and finish our prayers, when I switch off the light and linger in the doorway, is when we talk the most. With moonlight streaming in the windows, maybe it is easier to ask the hard questions every parent struggles to the right answers for. I think we forged the foundation of our discussions by sharing books and the ideas, conflicts and situations they portrayed.

And if they have opened avenues for dialogue, they also offer opportunities to listen as a young man forms his own opinions — and to learn to trust his good sense and the values he's absorbed by watching us trying to live our beliefs.

The reading menu ranged from "Boxcar Children" books and Bible stories to flights of fantasy, including Susan Cooper's "The Dark Is Rising" series, C.S. Lewis' Narnian chronicles, the "Redwall" novels by Brian Jacques and, most recently, the four books starring J.K. Rowling's wizarding wonder, Harry Potter.

But not everyone is wild about Harry.

Two years ago, when working on a Y2K story, one of the people I interviewed confided it wasn't computer glitches we had to worry about. No sir, the government had things well in hand. We should be more worried "about the witchcraft they're teaching our children at school."

I blinked. Say again?

"You know," he said. "Those Harry Potter books."

Ever since the popularity of Rowling's books skyrocketed, so has the concern of some Christians about the spiritual message they believe the books carry.

In an e-mail circulating months before the movie release, the Traditional Values Coalition raised the question, "Is Harry Potter a harmless fantasy or a Wicca training program?" It recommended parents and preachers watch "Harry Potter: Witchcraft Repackaged," a documentary that "takes the viewer on a grim journey into the world of witchcraft, goddess worship and occult symbolism — all messages conveyed in the Harry Potter books."

It also cautioned, "In addition to worshipping the earth and advocating homosexuality, witches also believe in abortion as a sacred act. ... While the themes in Harry Potter books do not expressly advo- cate homosexuality or abortion, these are philosophical beliefs deeply embedded in Wicca. "The child who is seared into Wicca through Harry Potter books will eventually be introduced to these other concepts."

Homosexuality? Goddess worship? Where? I've read all four books and can only say in the words of one of the more memorable characters, Rubeus Hagrid, "Codswallop!" They will be more likely to encounter those concepts on the even news.

Nowhere do the books mention witchcraft or wizardry as a religion or a belief system. Sure, they celebrate Halloween at Hogwarts, but they also celebrate Christmas. How about the concepts of truth and friendship? I don't think the books appeal to kids because of the witchcraft. In the long run, as they grow up, it won't be the spells they remember, or that Harry is a wizard. It will be because Harry is a courageous, honest kid who stands by his friends. That he triumphed over evil despite great odds not through witchcraft but because of the kind of person he was.

Harry Potter may speak to that part of us that's a little pagan — we are, after all, of the Earth — or the fanciful part of us wishing for a magic wand to help us with our housework. But I think it speaks more to the part of us seeking something deeper and more sustaining than material things can provide, something that speaks to our spirits. If there is an embedded message, it is choosing to use your gifts in a positive way, for good to triumph over evil, and I think we're selling our kids short if we think they can't figure that out.
It's one of our jobs as parents to help children learn the difference between fantasy and reality. If we've done it well, we don't need to worry. Yes, they may want to don capes and wave wands and cast spells for awhile, but don't think they don't know that kind of magic isn't real. Apparently not many parents are that worried about the movie — it broke box office debut records and is well on its way to setting more.

But any parent concerned about what lessons Harry Potter teaches should read the books all the way through for themselves and not rely on second-hand information. "Why?" can be a beautiful question, a gateway to a teachable moment.

As a friend of mine who is a minister observed, "If Harry Potter teaches anything, it is imagination."

Imagination is the spark that runs through the powder keg of our intellect. It is the great "what if," the stuff of Don Quixote's impossible dreams.

What if we took the burning branch back to cave?

What if the Earth is round?

What if we consider the concept that all people are created equal?

What if we can walk on the moon?

What if God loved us so much he sent his son to be born of a virgin? And what if that same son rose from the dead?

We need the power of imagination that not only allows Harry Potter to leap on his broomstick and fly, but to look within himself and discover the power of love. And it is imagination that allows us to believe in those things we can see only with our hearts, to make our own leaps of faith.
Preaching the Gospel is the heartbeat of Peterson’s mission at Fellowship Baptist

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

MEDINA — Late afternoon sunlight burned gold into the maple trees, a bright alleluia against blue skies, as the sanctuary of Fellowship Baptist Church began to fill with people and music. Joshua Peterson, standing tall in his Sunday best, offered his arm to his mother, Senesa Peterson, and walked her down the center aisle of the church as if seating her at a wedding.

And in a sense it was a wedding, of a woman to the ministry of the church and her God. With praise and prayer, Senesa prepared to preach her first sermon.

Charlie Bell, member and music director of Fellowship, sang a song that reflected the joy and solemnity of the occasion: "... to deepen our devotion to the cross at any price ... to love the Lord our God is the heartbeat of her mission ... to proclaim and live the truth in Jesus' name ..."

Throughout the song and introductory prayers and greetings, the electronic chime of the church's door punctuated the words and the music like little affirmations, small amens as more family and friends joined to hear Senesa's words.

But the Rev. John Peterson, Senesa's husband and pastor of the church, thinks women should have the chance to be ministers. "God can use women in ministry as well as men," he said. "It's time for a change. The verses have to be put in their cultural context. The Bible also says that especially in the last days, God would pour out his spirit on all flesh," he added, with quiet emphasis on the word "all."

Fellowship Baptist warmly honors its members with titles of "Sister" and "Brother" by name. On Oct. 13, they claimed Senesa as "Minister" as the Rev. James Hughes blessed her and acknowledged her call to a formal leadership role, underlining his words with God's words from Scripture.

"You can tell a tree by the fruit it bears, and I'm pleased to be the fruit of Senesa's ministry," said Tracey Robinson, who welcomed the congregation, as well as the veteran ministers who came to support and officially recognize the new one.

The Rev. John Peterson said it was a day of mixed emotions, of pride and love, as he acknowledged "his wife and sister in Christ, who makes known her call to the gospel ministry," and recognized her first sermon by his authority as pastor of the church.

Senesa built her words on the foundation of Isaiah 61:1:
"The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Elegant in a black dress, she stepped to the pulpit, thick Bible in hand, and looked out at the congregation, her voice strong and steady as she began to speak.

"God is blessing you right now," she said.

In a church whose congregation takes an active role in proclaiming God's truth, answering the preacher with heartfelt alleluia and amen, people responded with warmth, with arms raised to welcome the word and work of the Lord as she spoke. She poured the words out as "an empty vessel wanting to be used by God. I've just come to uplift the name of Jesus, not me. This is what he's given me ... I'm nothing without Jesus."

Senesa grew up at Fellowship Baptist, from the time members held the first services in her parents' garage and later, at United...
Church of Christ Congregational, before the current church was built. She called the services, Sunday school, vacation Bible school shared with the kids from First Baptist and youth choir blessings for her and her brother.

But after her first marriage ended in divorce and she struggled as a single mother, by 1980 she described her life as being “detoured. I didn’t have peace, didn’t have the unspokenable joy I have now. I had to decide which master I wanted to serve. I came to the end of the road, and I turned back.”

She talked about also having a simple faith and becoming a “new creation in Christ” with a new heart and mind, after Rachel Neal — also a minister now — witnessed to her in Fellowship’s parking lot one night after services.

“I wanted to give up all my old life to serve God. I did, and he has gently led me.”

In a voice that sometimes trembled with emotion, she talked about women of the Bible who served God, like Deborah, Esther, Lydia and Mary, the mother of God, women who “walk out their destiny.”

She began her own walk toward the ministry about 12 years ago, talking things out with John, who gave her the support and encouragement she needed to continue.

“I strongly felt chosen to give out the Gospel,” she said. “I knew God was preparing me, and I waited on the Lord to make sure that was what he wanted. The last confirmation I needed came through prayer, fasting and submitting to his will.”

To broaden her formal knowledge of Scripture and teaching, she began to attend classes in May at Springs of Life, a non-denominational Bible college in North Ridgeville. Within her church, ministers may receive licenses from the pastor — what is required is a hunger for Scripture and a heart for God.

Although resistance to women preaching still exists — she said many Baptist churches don’t believe in it — she has not experienced any negative reactions.

“I was so happy that the door was open to me,” Senesa said. “I didn’t feel uncomfortable, I felt I was treated like a woman should have been treated. As I became the woman of God he created me to be, I believe he will work through me to have a positive impact on people for his glory.”

As Senesa accepted the ministry license, with approval of the Rev. Rufus Thompson, pastor of Wadsworth First Baptist Church and moderator for the Akron Sub-District of Northern Baptist Churches, and other ministers, her husband said, “We’ve done as the Lord commanded, and no one is mad but the devil.”
The Wiccan way

Saturday, November 17, 2001

"Are you a good witch, or a bad witch?"
"Have you come out of the broom closet?"
"Double, double toil and trouble..."

The Wiccans have heard all the bad jokes and quotes about witches and witchcraft. But not all Wiccans are practicing witches and vice versa. It's probably safe to say Wicca is one of the most misunderstood religions — and it is a legal religion, officially recognized by the U.S. government and blessed with tax-exempt status since 1986.

An Earth-based religion that recognizes a higher creative power who is both masculine and feminine, it has gained steadily in popularity since the 1960s.

"Jesus' teachings are good, but some people just can't worship in organized religions (with rules) made by man," said one Wiccan, who preferred to be identified only as Elizabeth.

"Those against paganism or Wicca are frightened, maybe frightened that it will undermine their own faith. But if you're strong in that faith, why worry about someone else's belief?"

She has practiced witchcraft about 50 years, and is bold enough to display a lighted pentacle "like Christmas decorations" in her front yard at times — even though it's occasionally prompted individuals to leave little notes saying "Thou shall not suffer a witch to live" on her doorstep.

Elizabeth started questioning for something outside the faith tradition in which she was raised after a minister excommunicated her from the Lutheran church when she likened him to Hitler.

"He had made comments in his sermon regarding people of certain races 'who were made to be servants,'" she said. "I was a teenager, and for teens, there are no shades of gray, only black and white."

When Elizabeth began to look for information in the late 1940s, pickings were slim, but she did discover Robert Graves' "The White Goddess" and a book by Margaret Murray about witchcraft in Europe.

"I didn't believe all of it, but it gave a different viewpoint about the old religions, worship of the nature gods. It set my feet on the path to the belief we are all part of creation, we are all connected to each other, to the earth, to the universe."

One author, who purportedly wrote about witchcraft actually called himself a Satanist. "True Wiccans don't believe in Satan. The pentacle, she said, perceived as a symbol of devil-worship, once was used by Christians in the Middle Ages as a symbol of God, with the five points of the star representing the five wounds of Christ.

"Wiccans use it to banish evil or negative energy." Elizabeth said. "Satanists use inverted pentagrams."

Not all Wiccans are witches. Elizabeth said she took the title because she wanted to reclaim the word for what it was.

"I had a 'crowning' ceremony. It's important to honor your elders, important to honor all stages of your life, maiden, mother and crone."

Like Elizabeth, Medina resident Kathy Mojzer began her spiritual search when she felt mired in conventional religion practices.

"I attended church when I was a child, and was first attracted to witchcraft in high school, but then I was motivated by a teen's rebellion," Mojzer said. "My grandmother, who worshiped in the Unitarian church, told me if you want to learn about it, talk to someone. Keep an open mind and remember what you've been taught. You'll find there are many ways to God."

She disregarded the advice at the time. About three years ago, after talking to the owner of Ambergram, a metaphysical store in Broadview Heights, she felt a pull toward Wicca. When a coworker casually mentioned her family practiced witchcraft and invited Mojzer to join them, she was "scared but excited. I decided to face my fears. I didn't feel Wicca was the only thing out there for me, but it's what I've chosen because it's very gentle. I love learning to honor things of the Earth."

Before people condemn it, she wanted to remind them of the rituals Christians, Jews and Muslims observe to set the stage for holy days.

"The symbols and items witches use, like candles or crystals, are simply to focus their concentration," Mojzer said. "What you really learn to do is work on letting go of negativity."

Because she didn't want to make her family uncomfortable, she performs her ceremonies late at night, when everyone is asleep, or when they're gone.

Families sometimes have a tough time coming to grips with the situation when a loved one announces they are joining a Wiccan worship group.

Elizabeth, who once was asked to remove the curse from the Cleveland Indians — "there was no curse, they were just bad ballplayers" — said some of her great nephews and great nieces were curious about her beliefs, but no one has taken her to task for them.

"I think most of my family has always been interested in various forms of religion. Rest assured, we don't worship Satan," Elizabeth said, adding it was important for families to keep minds and lines of communication open.
Wiccans value life, believe in creation and the continuity of life after death. There are no literal sacrifices, only symbolic ones. "We are eternal spirits from an eternal source. Love cannot be lost. Love is eternal."

Like Christianity, it has its own extremists who twist Wiccan beliefs and practices to their own, sometimes dark, purposes.

"If someone tells you they worship the devil, run the other way," said Elizabeth, who also attends Westshore Unitarian-Universalist Church in Rocky River. "Our church is a teaching church. We believe in the inherent worth of every human being."

She joined the church when she discovered the minister welcomed Wiccans.

"I was introduced as the 'resident witch' to the new minister, and he was delighted," she said, laughing heartily. It turned out an entire coven attended the church he pastored in New Orleans. He helped her start a C.U.P group - Covenant of Unitarian-Universalist Pagans, a nationally known organization.

It gives participants a safe place to talk about being Pagans, to share their experiences, support each other and share their beliefs.

"I believe in Jesus," Mojzer said. "But there's more to his message of being born again. It's true, but you have to realize rebirth also comes when we realize what our true purpose is on Earth — when we realize we are all children of God."

And as for the question, "Are you a good witch or a bad witch?" the answer lies, the witches say, as it does with anyone regardless of their faith — within the heart and conscience of each individual.
Peanuts, popcorn is their litany
Our Lady Help of Christians feeds the flock at the Jake

CLEVELAND — At 10 a.m. Sunday, Jacobs Field is in a pre-launch mode. The stands and field form a bowl filled with silence and sunlight. But at concession stand nine, things have already started to happen.

Members of Our Lady Help of Christians, a six-church parish in Medina County, already are at work, putting hundreds of hot dogs and brats on the grills, pouring nachos into plastic trays and cups.

The church is one of dozens of nonprofit groups that volunteer to man concession stands as fund-raisers for their organizations. It is a different side to their ministry, with "peanuts, popcorn and Cracker Jack" as their litany.

Parish members hawk hot dogs in three-day weekend clusters four times during the season. Their 10 percent take for 12 games is about $10,000 — mucho nachos and a doggone lot of dogs over the counter.

"It’s a good money-maker, but it’s very difficult," Karen Flanigan said. She and Shawn, her husband, members of the Spencer mission of the parish, managed the booth Sunday, overseeing 19 volunteers. "A lot of groups do this, but it’s sometimes hard to sustain interest. Enthusiasm dwindles because the day is so demanding. It’s a big commitment of time. To make it work, you have to be consistent, conscientious, about doing it."

Managers need to be on-site about four hours before game time. The rest of their volunteer crew arrive about two hours prior to the first pitch. Before No. 9 opens, Karen and Shawn count every hot dog bun, every cup, every pretzel when they arrive, and they'll do it all over again afterward.

Karen said Sportservice, the food concession company, is good about giving them the booth they request — one of the largest in the park — since the parish has been so faithful about manning the space for the past five years. If there are rain delays or doubleheaders, the volunteers must stay.

Everyone working the stand must wear dark blue slacks — no jeans allowed — a white shirt topped by a red-and-white striped shirt, and a blue or black Indians cap. If you don’t own a cap, you must wear a snazzy little white paper number to cover your curls. Workers are allowed one free hot dog and each keeps their own cup for pop. If anything falls, it’s consigned to "spoilage."

"It’s great to work with the not-for-profit groups," said Mason Gallmeyer, an assistant concession manager with Sportservice. "We have 14 permanent stands and 25 portables. About 150 not-for-profit groups volunteer throughout the season. Some work a couple of games and some work every single game."

Church group mans the concession stand
and some work every single game."

Volunteer managers like the Flanigans go through a training program in March so they know what to expect, but Gallmeyer said every day is a training day.

The parish stand features 12 tangents — service windows to those on the Chow-down side — with "all-American" fare. They prepare as much ahead of time as possible, filling condiment and napkin dispensers, salting the soft pretzels. As game time approaches, Shawn hustles past, arms loaded with bags of peanuts and Cracker Jack. He and Karen give the impression of being 10 places at once.

"Let’s make those nacho displays," he calls over his shoulder. He disappears through the swinging doors into the storage and preparation areas, where Darlene Yagers and Julie Bumbulis "wrap to the beat," packaging each sandwich in a neat cocoon of thin brown paper or silver foil.

"We set a record last game for the number of hot dogs sold," Karen said. "It’s fast-paced."

"You might want to put on another case of brats," said Musheerah Holmes, a Sportservice vending leader at the Jake since 1995. She shouts over the din, reminding people to screw the beer taps into place as more fans start to crowd the concourse.

"Stay by your tangents," Karen cautions everyone once the registers are unlocked and
the volunteers tie navy blue aprons over their shirts.

Sportservice staff check on the stands throughout the games, making sure everything is up and running and all the tangents are manned. If a register is untended — unless it's out of commission — the stand could receive a penalty.

"Sportservice has made it easy for volunteers to work," said Nancy Tinney of York Township, who also has worked the Jake with other organizations, including Litchfield Ballpark. "When you work one of the tangents, all you have to do is hit the (register) key for the items they want and then the total key — it's all automatic."

Even the big, stainless steel sinks have specific directions on them for water levels.

Once everyone figures out their job, things go smoothly, and by the time the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" float through the concourse, they are pros.

"It's crazy," Dave Leffew says as he tops off a plastic mug of beer. "The first few times it's pretty exciting to see inside, behind the scenes at Jacobs Field, but the third or fourth time, it's more like 'Oh, my God, look at how much we have to do.' But there's a lot of camaraderie, and it's for the church."

Since several scheduled members called off, a few Sportservice people step in to help during busy times. Shots of the game flash on the monitors mounted in the stand, but no one has time to watch.

"When they announced during Mass this morning that we were going to be short-handed, a few more people came down," Jackie Lardie of Chippewa Lake said. "I think there are about 18 of us here today. It's fun when the priests and nuns come to work with us on Fridays and Saturdays."

Business remains steady, increasing during the third inning — "I think everyone gets a little antsy," Karen said — and again during the seventh-inning stretch.

"By the fifth inning, people get hungry for dessert, and that's when ice cream sales pick up," Herb Skala of York Township said as he wrapped a waffle cone with paper and packed it with mint chocolate chip.

And some people came to solace themselves with food when defeat seemed imminent.

At the seventh, with the Indians faltering badly, one patron looked at the sign at the back of the stand and said, with a rueful shake of his head, "Your sign should read 'Our Lady Help of Indians.'"

As soon as the final out is called, the windows close and cleanup begins — scrubbing the nacho cheese vats, scraping the grills, tallying the take.

"That's the 10th inning for us," Shawn said, grinning as he wiped down a counter.

"And then we'll say 'Who won?'" Karen said.