

## **The Birth of a Community**

In June of 1977, the Archdiocese of Detroit determined that the fast growing community of Washington Township in northern Macomb County might require an additional Catholic parish. So, a “Mass station” was created by St. Clement Church in Romeo as the sponsor, with the support of its pastor Fr. William Dowell. Fr. Arnie Bastien, the associate pastor at St. Clement, led the faithful at Washington Elementary School in the celebration of the Eucharist each weekend. As the number of people who flocked to the Mass station increased, a more permanent solution was needed. The Mass station was up graded to the status of a “parish-in-formation”.

With that new status a pastor was sought for the community. Several priests were interested, and in December of 1978 Cardinal John Dearden appointed Fr. Ronald E. Sayes to help the parish grow into a permanent parish. The territorial area set aside for the parish extended from Romeo Plank on the east to Dequindre on the west; 26 Mile Rd. on the south to 29 Mile Rd. on the north. This continues to be the geographical boundaries for the parish with one change—we now extend officially up to 30 Mile Rd. on the north.

The name chosen for the new parish community was “Saints John and Paul,” two brothers from Rome who were martyred around 362 A.D., for refusing the whims of an emperor who had renounced the Christian faith. Among the many names considered, this one struck a chord, because it dovetailed with the names of all the recent popes, including Pope John Paul II who was elected in September of 1978, just before the community received its new status as a parish-in-formation.



**Icon of the martyrs  
John and Paul,  
hanging on east wall  
of the church**

## **The First Year**

SS. John and Paul quickly began to meet the needs of its growing community. The first step was to register families belonging

to the parish. In January of 1979, 107 families registered as parishioners. Commissions started to be formed, and weekend Masses continued at Washington Elementary School with weekday Masses now beginning in the homes of parish members and in the newly acquired “parish house.” This parish house was graciously loaned to the parish at no cost for six years. It served as Fr. Sayes’ residence as well as the parish office and daily Mass chapel.

In the spring of 1979, Fr. Sayes called upon the parishioners to volunteer for the newly forming Parish Council. In these early years at-large Parish Council members were nominated and voted on by parishioners 16 years and older. The council also was comprised of representatives from five commissions: Religious Education, Worship, Christian Service, Administrative, and Youth.

The parishioners of SS. John and Paul willingly stepped forward to help their community grow and prosper, covering each area of parish life. Volunteers were responsible for the music at weekend Eucharist. People signed up and served as Eucharistic ministers, lectors, catechists, altar servers and ushers. The first ushers’ meeting was in May of 1979. SS. John and Paul was well on their way to fulfilling the requirements set by the Archdiocese of Detroit for a parish-in-formation to become a permanent one. By the end of its first year, SS. John and Paul Parish had grown to 319 registered families.

Some of the memorable customs that were started at the time included Eucharistic bread that was homemade. Traditional hosts were not used until May of 1985. At the beginning parents could choose to have their children baptized in their home, the parish house, or during one of the weekend masses. Serving at the altar was done by the whole family instead of individual children.

### **Planting Roots**

With the necessary services to parishioners being met, and solid financial support given by over 300 families, it was time for SS. John and Paul to apply for permanent status. On February 29, 1980, Cardinal Dearden designated SS. John and Paul officially as a canonical parish. This joyous occasion was celebrated at a Mass on April 12<sup>th</sup>. The vicar for the North Macomb Vicariate presided at that Mass and installed Fr. Sayes as the parish’s first and founding pastor.

To better accommodate our growing parish, in September of 1980 Sunday liturgy moved to Powell Junior High School, located on

Jewel road between 28 and 29 mile roads. The cafeteria, just inside the front doors of the school, served as the worship space. Mass times were Saturday 5:30 p.m. and Sunday 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Time passed. The rhythm of the parish's life revolved around growth and fellowship. Religious education classes were no longer in parishioners homes but taking place weekly at Washington Elementary School. The desire grew for a church building to call our own. A building committee was formed to actively plan for and oversee the construction of a new church building. Land owned for many years by the Archdiocese of Detroit on 28 Mile Road west of Campground (the present location) became the designated spot for a church building. An architect was hired and a preliminary sketch and site plan was completed.

After much more hard work by the committee, a formal request for permission to build a church and a loan request of \$475,000 was presented to Archbishop Edmund Szoka and the Archdiocesan Board of Consultors, who approved the request on April 19, 1983. With the approval to build, a pledge drive began to raise an extra \$150,000. We were on our way to having our own worship space.

### **From the Ground Up**

The church for SS. John and Paul Parish began with a ground breaking ceremony on October 2, 1983. At the beginning of 1984 bids were accepted for the construction of the church. A cost ceiling of \$700,000 was set by the archdiocese for the construction and furnishing of the church. Initial bids were high and cost cutting revisions were made. In April, a contract was signed with a general contractor and construction began by the end of the month.

Construction came to a halt in July as water problems interfered. Water had to be pumped out and sand brought in before the footings could be poured and construction could continue. These problems increased the cost of the building to the parish. Permission was granted to increase the loan from the archdiocese by \$75,000. And due to the land problems, the Archdiocese forgave the \$32,000 that the parish would have had to pay for the property.

The generosity and talent of the parishioners was evident as the church was being built. One family donated one half the cost of the site work. Another donated the large wooden cross on the outside of the church and also built two altars, the ambo (where the lectors read from),

and the baptismal font. Another used his artistic talent to create the chalice vessels and bread plates. Parishioners were given the opportunity to donate specific items and furnishings for the new church. Fr. Sayes' mother donated the cost of the tabernacle in memory of his father who died the year before.



**Exterior of SS. John and Paul Church**

The electronic keyboard went up for sale, since an organ would be included in the new building. A hunt for an organist and choir director began. A music major at Wayne State volunteered to form and lead a choir to prepare for the inaugural Mass in the new church building. Despite the site problems and delays, the first liturgy was celebrated with much jubilation on Christmas Eve, December 24,

1984. By January, the church offices moved into the new building, and an organist was hired. As the parish house was no longer needed, Fr. Sayes moved into the Stoney Creek apartments.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the new church building—worship space, offices, and gathering space—was formally dedicated at the 11:00 a.m. Mass by Archbishop Szoka. During this special Eucharistic liturgy, the keys to the church were presented to the archbishop. He sprinkled holy water on all who were assembled as well as the building. Archbishop Szoka also anointed the altar and the walls of the church with the Sacred Chrism, the same holy oil used in Baptisms, Confirmations, and Ordinations. Included in the ceremony was the consecration of the Eucharistic chapel at the back of the church. [NB: that space is now used as the parish library and meeting room called the “Disciples’ Room”]. A dedication dance was held at the Club Monte Carlo on the 16<sup>th</sup> of that same month. The parish family of SS. John and Paul was finally able to celebrate the completion of their new home.

### **Settling In**

With the church building completed, the focus during 1985 was on settling into our new home. A silent auction was held to raise money

to purchase equipment for the kitchen, \$1900 was collected. Come spring, the parking lot was completed and sod was planted. Two blue spruce trees were donated and planted on either side of the main entrances. Inside, baskets of silk arrangements were hung on either side of the altar. New liturgical robes were sewn for the altar servers. Through the donations of parish families, beautiful statues of Mary and Joseph were installed by the end of the year. This year also saw the official end of the building fund campaign.

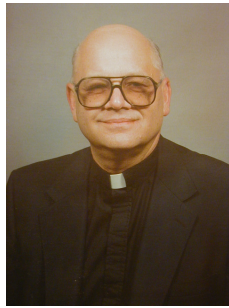
Over the next few years parish life continued to revolve around the church year. In 1986, religious education classes moved to the back social hall area of the church on Saturday mornings. That year SS. John and Paul also changed the way Parish Council elections were held. No longer would the council members be chosen by vote. Instead, a lottery or selection was held. All the names of those interested in volunteering were placed in a basket, and after prayer, names were drawn to serve on the council.

In June of 1987, Fr. Sayes celebrated his 30 year anniversary as a priest and was surprised with a party. Another important celebration was being planned that year. Pope John Paul was coming to Pontiac, Michigan to celebrate Mass at the Silverdome on September 19<sup>th</sup>. SS. John and Paul Parish received 114 tickets. The tickets were distributed by means of a lottery. All interested parties submitted their names and were randomly drawn.

From the routine of parish life to special celebrations, SS. John and Paul Parish continued to thrive, growing to 650 registered families by the end of 1988.

### **Transitions and More**

In the fall of 1990 the religious education program began using Powell Junior High for its classrooms, after experimenting for three years with Saturday classes using the church building. But the changes did not stop there. Though there had been staff replacements over the years—music directors, religious education directors, secretaries, youth ministers, and the like—the first major transition would be the leaving of Fr. Sayes. In October 1990, Fr Sayes said goodbye to SS. John and Paul and moved to St. Perpetua Church in Waterford. For twelve years, Fr. Sayes led the people of SS. John and



**Fr. Ronald E. Sayes**  
**Founding Pastor**

Paul on an incredible journey of faith. We grew from our humble beginnings at Washington Elementary to a fully functioning parish with our own church. Fr. Sayes had laid the ground work, taught us how to be a parish community, and let us go to grow in our faith and our community without him.

Fr. Sayes replacement was Fr. Arthur J. Bell, transferring from St. Roch in Flat Rock, Michigan. Fr. Bell was officially installed as SS. John and Paul's pastor on December 1, 1990 at the 5:00 p.m. Mass. Only a few months after coming to SS. John and Paul, Fr. Bell won the "John Farrell Award," which allowed him to take a sabbatical in Rome for almost three months. While Fr. Bell was away, Fr. Jim Henning held down the fort as temporary administrator. Fr. Bell kept in touch with letters that were published in the church bulletin. After his return, the parish and Fr. Bell continued to get acquainted with one another. Fr. Bell and the parish with him celebrated his 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a priest soon after.

With new leadership came some staff changes. A new religious education director, minister of music, and part time youth minister were hired and Deacon Frank DeSmedt was appointed in 1992 to serve the parish as a married deacon. The parish made a significant purchase that year as well. A house was purchased in the "Woodfield Subdivision" for use as the rectory. Fr. Bell moved into the ranch style home in the summer of 1992, and the house continues to this day to be the residence for the parish pastor.

There were also changes going on inside the church. Decorations were added that would enhance the worship space. The oriental rug that had hung for several years behind the altar was replaced by a new cruciform backdrop, which allowed for various circles of color and symbols to be attached. This was installed for the Easter mass in 1992. A committee was formed to investigate the purchase of a new organ, and the proposed purchase (\$42,800) was accepted by the Parish Council. On January 10, 1993, Archbishop Maida attended the 11:00 a.m. Mass to bless and dedicate the new sanctuary backdrop and new organ. A new cabinet to display the holy oil was installed as well.



**Interior of Church with  
cruciform backdrop**

After only 3 years and 7 months as pastor at SS. John and Paul, Fr. Bell had to move to St. Mark Church on Harsens Island for health reasons. A smaller parish would be more conducive to his recuperation. Fr. Bell left us with his enthusiasm for recycling, his concern for many social issues, and his outspoken views on

church issues (for example, that clergy should be able to marry and women should be ordained).

Fr. Bell was replaced by Fr. Terence Treppa, who also brought with him as a weekend associate Fr. John McPhee. In August 1994, Fr. Treppa was formally installed as our pastor. Once again staff changes soon followed. A new youth minister, new director of religious education, and a new music minister were hired. There was a period of adjustment as the parish became acquainted with all the new faces.

One of Fr. Treppa's first assignments was to familiarize the parish with the "Stewards for Tomorrow" endowment fund for the Archdiocese of Detroit. Pledges were taken for monies to be paid over a three year period. Home visits were used to collect pledges. SS. John and Paul had a target of \$195,000. It was a successful campaign. Overall, the Archdiocese of Detroit collected nearly \$80 million. The 20% of the parish's own contributions which were returned to the parish still are in a savings account, set aside to help with future parish needs.

Parish life continued as the new faces brought new ideas to our parish. A youth choir was formed. A Social Events Committee began to plan upcoming events. A "Children's Liturgy of the Word" started, with volunteers taking the children out during the first part of Mass so that they could listen to and discuss the Scripture readings at their own level. During this time the people of SS. John and Paul created a mission statement which read: "The mission of SS. John and Paul Parish is to create an environment where parishioners are invited to participate in worship, religious education, social service and stewardship."

In March of 1998, Fr. Treppa announced that he applied for and got the position of pastor at St. Richard Parish in Westland. Fr. Treppa and Fr. McPhee, who was facing declining health, left at the end of June. Fr. Treppa would always be remembered for his devotion to the Lions club and their causes, which brought him into active involvement in a number of Washington Township activities.

One of the challenges for SS. John and Paul over the years has been the need to face many transitions in leadership, each bringing with it new faces, new styles of leadership, new ways of celebrating and being a parish community. With Fr. Treppa's departure another such transition began, this time with Fr. Gary Bueche as the new pastor, who came to SS. John and Paul from St. Frances Cabrini in Allen Park, Michigan. He began on July 1, 1998 and the parish celebrated his installation liturgy on August 30, 1998.

Immediately Fr. Bueche invited people to participate, to use their talents for the betterment of the community. An avid gardener, Fr. Bueche called for volunteers to help create flower beds at the entrances of the church. A landscape committee was formed to add life to the grounds. In May 1999, a beautiful new raised garden was added under the cross in front of the church. A statue of Mary holding her son, the Pieta, was in the center. Some badly needed repairs were also completed: a new well was dug, and roof repairs were made to fix the damage caused by the leaky roof.

Some alterations were happening inside the church as well. In June 1999, the walls between the worship space and the gathering space were taken down to accommodate our growing congregation. Folding accordion partition walls replaced the fixed-in-place old ones. The back social hall area now had to be ready to be used both as a social area and a Sunday overflow area. New lights were hung in the church. A hospitality committee was formed and they developed the first ever clothing line for SS. John and Paul, with its own logo. Parishioners were asked to fill out census information to update the parish files, the Baptismal font was moved into the gathering space, and we stopped using the missalettes on the first Sunday of Advent 1998.

Staff changes also came with the new administration. SS. John and Paul hired a new director of youth ministry to combine our program with St. Clement in Romeo. A pastoral associate position was created, at first in conjunction with directing the religious education program, but within a year it was split into two full-time



positions. As Fr. Bueche celebrated his first anniversary at SS. John and Paul, we surpassed our CSA target for the first time in several years. SS John and Paul was \$30,908 over their target!

In October of 1999, Fr. Bueche and Fr. John West (a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit whose parents are still members of the parish) led 33 parishioners on a “Parish Jubilee Pilgrimage” to Italy and Rome in anticipation of the celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000. Pope John Paul II opened the Holy Doors in Rome on Christmas Eve to begin the Jubilee year. The pilgrimage included a visit to the Church of SS. John and Paul in Rome, near the spot where the brothers were believed to be martyred. Parish members were given jubilee stickers to place on their doors as well.

SS. John and Paul was growing very quickly. New chairs were purchased and placed at the back of the church to accommodate the overflow at the 11:00 a.m. Mass. Fr. Bueche asked for volunteers to participate on a planning and building committee to begin exploring the options we had for building expansion. It seemed as though we had just gone through this same process not so long ago. But, we had nearly doubled in size since the church was built in 1984. In January 2000, the parish received permission to begin planning for a new worship space. There was a real sense of excitement in the parish. We were growing, we were out of debt, and we were going to expand our church to have room for all we wanted to do. In June we celebrated with Fr. Bueche his 30 year anniversary as a priest.

In September of 2000 the Archdiocese of Detroit closed on a purchase of 10 acres immediately adjacent to our property on the north. With this purchase the parish now had sufficient land for any future needs, though the parish also incurred a debt of nearly \$1 million dollars. On the positive side this loan was and continues to the present to be an interest-free debt until the parish decides on what its future expansion will be. As parish life continued to develop, a kitchen ministry was formed to provide refreshments for meetings and events. The parking lot was expanded on the west end with gravel. New hymnals, “Ritual Song,” were purchased and are still in use today. The 1000<sup>th</sup> household was registered in the parish.

### **Weathering Some Storms**

Along with the rest of the world, SS. John and Paul witnessed

the tragic events of September 11, 2001 unfold. In response, our parish collected over \$5700 for the victims and families of that horrible day. Shortly thereafter, due to the severe economic downturn, the Archdiocese instituted new rules on borrowing money. Initial loans to get a project started would no longer be possible. Plans for a new church had to be tabled indefinitely.

On the positive side, the year 2002 started with our founding pastor, Fr. Ronald Sayes, rejoining SS. John and Paul as a senior priest. Senior priests are not assigned to any parish but can choose to help at whatever parish they wished. We were delighted to have him back in our company. Our parish began using greeters at all the Masses in our expanding effort to welcome people. SS. John and Paul also began a soup kitchen ministry team to go to the Salvation Army soup kitchen in Mt. Clemens.

In the spring of 2002 the Catholic Church in the United States had to face the tragic reality of priestly abuse of minors. In the Archdiocese of Detroit nearly 20 priests, including Fr. Bueche, were removed from their assignments, due to credible allegations or admitted past abuse of minors. Fr. Bueche said his last Mass at SS. John and Paul on Easter morning of 2002 and then went on permanent administrative leave. People were confused, hurt, sad, disappointed and angry. Fr. John Hall, a senior priest living at St. Lawrence in Utica was assigned to the parish to be our temporary administrator. Fr. Hall tried his best as did Fr. Sayes to keep our spirits up and keep us focused on the future, but this was a very difficult time. We had faced many transitions in our short history but this one was the hardest.

By the end of April, it was announced that Fr. David Buersmeyer from Christ the Good Shepherd Parish in Lincoln Park would be our new pastor as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. We were leery of who the Archdiocese would choose to be pastor. When Fr. Buersmeyer arrived, he found a parish in need of healing. Fr. Buersmeyer allowed us to feel our pain without letting us be paralyzed by it. He gently reminded us of what we were and what we could be. He helped us heal as a community.

Fortunately, most of the staff at SS. John and Paul remained during the transition. This helped the community remain focused on what it meant to be a parish. Although our plans for a new worship space and permanent activities center were no longer feasible, the fact remained; we desperately needed more space. The new focus was on adding a modular building to the existing church structure. Washington

Township gave us permission to add the modular with some stipulations. We had to pave the gravel areas of the parking lot to give us more spaces and add fire lane signs to the main drive. Money that the parish had saved over the last four years was used to pay for the building and the parking lot improvements. Excavating on the site began in November 2002. The modular building was delivered and by February of the following year, the finishing touches to the inside of the building were being completed. The final cost to the parish, including furnishings was about \$700,000 — \$165,000 would be debt to the Archdiocese as a loan.

The “Parish Activities Center” was almost ready to use. With an activities center available, our parish would be able to expand our ministries and social activities. The Hospitality committee formed a funeral luncheon team, a parish nurse/health ministry was formed, and the annual volunteer appreciation party was held for the first time in the activities center in May of 2003. But our work was not finished. Water issues with the building needed to be addressed and a walkway to the west entrance of the building had to be added along with landscaping and parking area.

With nearly a year of temporary replacements, a new minister of music was hired in June. The Archdiocese also started requiring all staff and volunteers (who worked with children) to undergo background checks and attend a training workshop entitled “Protecting God’s Children”. Our music ministry gained momentum again as singers, instrumentalists, and choir members came forward. Money was raised to purchase three octaves of hand bells for the music program. By the fall of 2003, all parish offices were moved into the Parish Activities Center, and we were able to begin holding religious formation classes in the new building. After many years using Powell Junior High, we now were able to provide for our religious education sessions at our own parish site. Fully utilizing the new building helped alleviate some of the overcrowding issues that we had been experiencing. For Christmas 2004 a complete crèche was displayed in the disciple’s room for the first time. It was also the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the church building.



**Fr. David Buersmeyer**  
**Current Pastor**

## **A Community Milestone**

As the year 2005 approached, the parishioners of SS. John and Paul began to think about how our 25 year anniversary as a parish community would be celebrated. An anniversary committee was formed to plan festivities that would run throughout the year. The parish was asked to collect pictures of parish events (especially the early years) and family sacraments for a history of the parish. Longtime parishioners were invited to participate in the recording of an oral history where they could share their memories.

The celebrations began with a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary mass on February 27<sup>th</sup>. New banners for the parish were unveiled; "Together in Spirit, Joy and Prayer". New candle stands were handmade by a parishioner, giving us a matching set of eight. Pictures taken throughout the years by parishioners were displayed during the reception for all to look at and reminisce over.

While plans continued for the year long celebration, the Parish Council (with the help of the various commissions) was busy developing short, medium and long term goals for the parish. Part of this planning included options for the use of the property purchased in 2000. This was required as part of the diocesan wide planning process called "Together in Faith", which was to determine the future of parishes and vicariate programs. In the parish, adult formation opportunities continued to be stressed: parish missions in 2004 and another planned for Lent of this year, 2006; Little Rock Scripture studies; November adult formation focused on end of life issues; Friday simple soups with speakers; and many more.

In April 2005, our parish along with the rest of our fellow Catholics all over the world grieved the only Pope many of us had ever known, Pope John Paul II. With mega media coverage we learned about the process of selecting a new pope. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became Pope Benedict.

The parish picnic was moved from its usual date in September to June 26<sup>th</sup>, closer to the feast day of the saints for whom our church was named. SS. John and Paul welcomed another new music minister, the 3<sup>rd</sup> in eighteen months. Plans were also underway for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination for Fr. Buersmeyer. A special mass and reception was planned for September 10<sup>th</sup>. The church building was getting some needed attention. The bathrooms were remodeled, the



**Christmas crèche 2005  
with all the new figures**

carpet cleaned, and the pavilion was power washed and given a fresh coat of paint.

Other 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary items included a cookbook and Christmas ornament. The year of festivities will come to an end with a dinner celebration on February 12, 2006 at the Carpathia Club and a final closing liturgy on February 26th.

### **Social Gatherings**

From the beginning, the people who would become SS. John and Paul valued the fellowship of their community. There have been picnics, polka masses, Sunday morning donuts, dinner dances, golf outings, Christmas parties, card parties, road rallies, wine tastings, potluck dinners, ice cream socials, Oktoberfest, and even a fashion show. Some of these events were meant for the entire family, and some were for the adults only.

The first parish picnic took place on September 16, 1979 at Stoney Creek Metropark in Washington Township. It was a simple affair with the families attending bringing their own food and refreshments. This gave the people of SS. John and Paul a yearly event at which they could come together to meet with and enjoy the company of their fellow parishioners. It has always been the most widely attended event that the parish puts on. After the first year, the picnic moved to the Addison Oaks picnic area where again parishioners packed their own meal. The picnic remained there until 1987 after which it was moved to the parish grounds. The menu expanded as hot dogs and beverages were available to purchase. A pavilion appeared



**Parish Picnic in the Pavilion**

on the church grounds in September 1989. This was accomplished through the hard work and dedication of the ushers club. They were in charge of both the fund raising efforts, and the barn raising. Each year, the picnic was held (except for 1986) and each year it expanded. Games, face painting, moonwalks, volleyball, and dancing were added throughout the years. In 1999, all the food was provided by the church, prepared by the ushers and desserts baked by parishioners. The simple meal of hot dogs and chips had grown into a full meal in which everyone left very satisfied.

There have been many dinner dances throughout the years. These adult only events have taken place in celebration of Sweetest Day, Valentines Day, Dedication of our church, and in celebration of all the people who volunteer their time and talents. The first dinner dance was held at Camelot Hall in October of 1979 before we were an official parish. Early dances were held at Orchard Place Hall in Romeo, and the Monte Carlo Club in Shelby township where \$15.00 would get you dinner, open bar, and a live band. There were appreciation parties that encouraged participants to dress in costume. "The Mardi Gras" celebration, the "Wild West" celebration and the "Celebrate America" parties had parishioners scrambling for special attire. Some of the social events change from year to year, but good socials from pot lucks to picnics to volunteer appreciation to special milestones have become a tradition in our parish family.

### **Parish Staff**

The priests have been named in the course of the parish history. But the parish has been served by many staff over the years. Some of the following names might bring to mind parts of that history. Organists, choir directors, musicians, and music ministers such as John Maio, Mary Lademann, Chris Seeley, Beverly Church, Marshall Lackowski, Judy Fletcher, Lisa Perazza, Donna Buller, Sr. Helen Huellmantel, Ray Myslakowski, Annette Wright, Mary Jane Schmidt, Louis Canter, Carl Reyes, and Al Eppens. Religious education directors, secretaries, youth ministers, Christian service people and pastoral associates such as Sr. Anne Cook, Connie Seeley, Kathy Fannon, Gary Krueger, Carole Clifford, Bill Saoud, Debbie DiDomenico, Robert Hadden, Deborah Saoud, Debbie Knoblock, Beth Bauer, Bernadine Biske, Lucy Sebastian, Margaret Miller, Denise Moncion, Jim Gammichia, Leigh Gatny, Kathy Mollon, Karen Peters,

Linda Bauer, and JoAnne Owens. Parish secretaries, bookkeepers, and business managers such as Kathy Turko, Marcia Capp, Mary Ann LaRaia, and Paula Klozik. Maintenance and custodial workers such as Cletus Hunt, Bev Witgen, Bill Mackowski, and Bob Lerczak.

### **Some Things Never Change**

No matter what the year, no matter who the pastor was, no matter where we were worshipping, there was always an echo of familiarity:

- The Christmas and Easter Masses will be very crowded.
- The lost and found box is full so if you are missing anything please check it.
- There are dishes in the kitchen that need to be picked up.
- Please don't read the bulletin during Mass.
- We are looking for catechists.
- Please don't leave right after communion.
- Please keep up on Sunday offerings during the summer months.
- Please be generous in your Sunday offerings.
- Please sing.
- Please be sure that you are not leaving garbage in the pews.
- We are looking for a new minister of music, new religious education director, new youth minister or other staff member.
- Please try and arrive at least five minutes before Mass begins.

### **Looking to the Future**

SS. John and Paul Parish has evolved from a small band of worshipers at a Mass station into an established community of faithful believers; believers in Christ and believers in the power of the Holy Spirit to shape us. We have experienced many changes throughout the years, in staff and members. But, all who have worshiped here have had an impact on who we are today. The joys and hardships that we have experienced as a parish have made us stronger.

We do not know what awaits us in the future. We continue to work on the goals and objectives that the Parish Council generated in 2005. New committees such as a vocations committee, website committee, and formation committee continue to emerge. Religious

education has expanded to three separate sessions and we are in the process of adding a family-centered religious education component to our program. We are trying out different ways to involve the whole community in catechesis/formation. We continue to look at how to either live with or expand the current church and whether a more permanent multi-purpose building with social hall/gym, offices, kitchen, and meeting/class rooms should be built first. As the area gains new housing, registration continues to grow. A schedule with four weekend Masses (one Saturday and three on Sunday) has become a permanent part of the schedule year-round. The shortage of priests continues to be a reality with more concerted vicariate planning occurring.

Only the Lord knows the path that SS. John and Paul Parish will take as we move into the future. We are determined to continue as a welcoming community and, with the Lord's help, we will survive, we will flourish, and we will remain the close-knit community that was started 25 years ago.

### **25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY PRAYER**

*“Baptized in Christ, confirmed in the Spirit, gathered and sent forth as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist: May our lives be a living witness to the faith which established this parish. May God be our strength; may the Spirit of God be our beacon of truth; may Jesus be the hope and pattern of our lives. Together in Spirit, Joy and Prayer, we give you thanks, O Lord our God, for all that we are and all that we can be, this day and always. Amen”*