

Brief History of Our Lady of Carter Lake Community

Welcome dear Bishop William Joensen, Corpus Christi Parishioners, and friends:

This Golden Jubilee moment is a special gift and blessing from God for all of us. Why? Because everything was a dream fifty years ago, and God helped us to make it a reality. That is to have our own church at Carter Lake for worship and to take care of our spiritual and temporal needs.

A small group of people led by Joe Huegerich spark the beginning flame. They took a community census of Catholic Families in March, 1968, and learned that there were 145 families in Carter Lake at that time attending eight different parishes around Carter Lake area.

Initial families of the dream were Joe and Dorothy Huegerich, Don and Dorothy Schieffer, Tyke and Dee Darveaux, Bob and Julie Stringer, and Bev and Clem Schrad. The Committee Officers included Ed Fitzpatrick as well.

The first public meeting was August 28, 1968. They asked priests from Sacred Heart (most went there) to help with religious education. Carter Lake Improvement Club offered Saturday mornings. Fr. McNally and Fr. Vavrina accepted the responsibility of to lead. Classes began September, 1968. October, 1969 the Presbyterian Church made their educational building available to us for religious classes.

August, 1969 the committee met with Bishop Maurice Dingman and asked about possibility to establish a parish community in Carter Lake. The bishop told them to submit a formal letter making the request for a faith community in Carter Lake.

July 16, 1970 Fr. Hart from Queen of Apostles Parish in Council Bluffs met with Catholics in Carter Lake. He told them he met with Bishop Dingman and both agreed to help if we could find a church facility to rent for Mass on Sundays and an education building for religion classes. The Presbyterian Church agreed to avail their facility on July 30, 1970. Then July 31, 1970 Fr. Hart met with the committee and told them Carter Lake was now a mission parish of Queen of Apostles, and will formally begin in September, 1970. The Columbian Fathers agreed to help with Mass on Sundays at 8 a.m.

Our first Mass was Sunday September 6, 1970 and Bishop Maurice Dingman presided over the Mass at 8 a.m. During his homily he said, "This moment will be of historic importance for a hundred years". He was pleasantly surprised at over 200 attended the very first Mass.

Now we need a parish name so the parishioner's choice was "Our Lady of Carter Lake" and it was approved by the Bishop.

Our first pastor was Fr. Richard Gubbels and Fr. Ed Hurley his assistant. We started having the rosary before Mass.

March 1973, two acres of land was purchased adjacent to the Lutheran Church, as a location for our future Church.

In the fall of 1975, we moved the Mass to the Lutheran church facility, which is our current building. Lutherans offered to rent the church and parish center. In September 1975 Bishop Dingman came and offered Mass to celebrate our 5th Anniversary.

The Statue of Mary was obtained in 1976, and is still present today. October of 1976 the Women's Guild began and Toni Annin was its first president.

July 1978, Fr. Bob Schoemann became pastor. The Lutheran's were struggling to make ends meet and decided to sell the property and building. They gave us first choice in March 1979. They met with our committee and purchase was finally made in the summer of 1980 with the able guidance of Fr. Schoeman. On September 6, 1980 Bishop Dingman came and dedicated our current Church building.

In 1981, the Baptists were seeking to establish a congregation. Father Schoeman said it was important for us to offer to them our facilities, to share as others did for us. We shared our facilities with the Baptist congregation.

In 1983, remodeling and changes began and went through 1989. July 1985, Fr. Larry Hoffmann became our pastor. In 1986, he began the Parish Fest as a celebration and fundraiser.

February 1988 girls were allowed to serve Mass for the first time.

1989, another faith community was forming in Carter Lake, the Methodists. They requested opportunity to rent the Church and Parish Center. Fr. Larry and the Council agreed and he said "it is a blessing to know that all the churches share to help one another".

The Stations of the Cross in church and the Crucifix in the hall were donated and are still here today.

September 9, 1990, Bishop William Bullock came and celebrated Mass for our 20th Anniversary. Bishop Dingman was ill and couldn't come, but he wrote heart felt letter with his blessings. Let me read it now.

Fr. Larry requested that Social Sunday be every Sunday after Mass with rolls and coffee as a fellowship, not a profit. It's a moment of thanksgiving to parishioners for all their help volunteering and support.

In July 1992, Fr. Phillip Kruse became pastor, followed in July 1993, with Fr. Fred Reischl.

Bishop Bullock appointed Fr. Dennis Trausch as a residential priest with the responsibility of pastoral care of the parish in Carter Lake, yet it still remained a mission of Queen of Apostles parish.

Sunday Mass then changed from 8:00 am to 9:00 am. The first Sunday of Advent added a Saturday evening Mass at 5:30 p.m. Then Mass was added to Monday and Thursday 7 p.m. The First Friday Mass at 6:30pm then Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 7p.m. to 7 a.m.

Going forward as a community, in 1995 a Motto was chosen, "We are Family – Growing Together in Faith".

Bishop Joseph Charron came in September 1995, to celebrate Mass for our 25th Anniversary. More remodeling and building done through 2002.

Fr. Dan Kirby became pastor in 2002 after the sudden death of Fr. Trausch in a tragic car accident, the month of August of the same year.

June 2004, Corpus Christi Procession was held in Carter Lake with the help Knights of Columbus. Fr. Dan also walked with the Women's Guild float in the Carter Lake Community parade.

Bringing together pastors of the five churches in Carter Lake in ecumenical spirit, was begun in July 2005. "Prayer, Pancakes in the Park". The talk was given by each representative of the respective parishes, and Fr. Dan was our first to do so.

At 5:30 p.m, Saturday, August 28, 2010, Bishop Richard Pates celebrated Mass for our 40th Anniversary and our Parish Fest was held on September 12th.

Fr. Dan Kirby started a “Novena of the Queenship of Mary” Feast day on August 22 to mark the Anniversary.

In 2011, Corpus Christi Parish was formed, which comprises Holy Family, Queen of Apostles and Our Lady of Carter Lake Mission site. Keeping one parish council and finance council.

Fr. Joel McNeil was appointed pastor in July 2012 and served for three years. A Spanish Mass was added. Fr. Mike Berner served as pastor in July 2015-Jan 2016, for a brief time.

Fr. Tom Thakadipuram, our current Pastor was appointed in January 2016, and now with Fr. Enrique Garcia, as our Associate Pastor. There are many other priests served the faithful community at Carter Lake.

We are so grateful to our beloved Bishop William Joensen for presiding over our Golden Jubilee Mass.

Let us raise our hearts in deep gratitude to God for all the priests and people of God who kept the flame of faith alive in our hearts.

By Dee Harrison.