

Outreach

During the time Father Paul Crunican was Pastor, a couple who were here on assignment from Michigan became active members of Sacred Heart Parish and shared with us some of the outreach activities in their previous parish.

Through them we began the Christmas Stocking drive. St. Vincent de Paul provided names and ages of children and youth to receive a stocking. In addition to the children, bags were given to Long Term Care Home residents who were without families, a group home for men and bags for each of the two hospitals for indigent women and men who were in the hospital during the Christmas season. Members of the parish cut and stitched the stockings. Later, felt became very expensive, we then made draw string bags. When our sewing ladies were unable to make bags, paper gift bags were introduced.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions gift bags had to be substituted by donations to St. Vincent de Paul and cards delivered to the Nursing Homes.

It has been a custom for many years to deliver Poinsettias to the housebound at Christmas. The St. Vincent Paul Society assist with the deliveries.

Easter Lillies are delivered by the Eucharistic Ministers to those who are experience bereavement during the year.

Caring and Sharing

Early in the 1980's there was a re-formation of some groups. Under the gentle mentor ship of Fr. Paul Crunican, a group of interested parishioners formed an outreach group to parishioners who were unable to come to mass for reasons of sickness, old age, no transportation or being home bound. The desire to help all parishioners feel they belonged to the parish was their keen interest. The group of 10 to 15 was first called "Be Kind to People". They met once a month and had a chairperson and recording secretary. They tried to match one on one for friendly visits, provide rides to church and plan socials at two nearby nursing homes. At this time, laypeople were first given the privilege of being Eucharistic ministers, and it followed that the ministers would come from this group, by now renamed the "Caring and Sharing" group. This began the bringing of communion to parishioners in homes and nursing homes. As well, they began attending the monthly masses at our two nursing/retirement homes, Bestview, now Sumac Lodge, and Murphy Manor, now Twin Lakes. In about 1983 Fr. Crunican began the Anointing masses, held once in the spring and one in the fall. The Caring and Sharing group hosted a social afterwards in the Meeting rooms which were always full to overflowing. One memorable Anointing mass was when Bishop Fred Henry officiated and the students from Sacred Heart School provided the music. The Anointing mass at Sacred Heart continues to this day every May/June with Leanne Moran's funeral choir providing the music and Marg Maheu and Mary Ellen Merchant arranging the social. The masses continue at the nursing homes and communion is still brought to the sick

in their own homes. Many meaningful friendships and unforgettable bonds have been formed over the years by the members of the Caring & Sharing group at Sacred Heart.

Sacred Heart Missions Committee

For many years a dedicated group of parishioners raised money through the sale of plants and flower decorations at the Sacred Heart Fall Fair to support missions.

When Fr. Joe Hardy was the pastor at Sacred Heart (in the 1980's) he suggested a more organized way of raising funds for the missions; by including an offertory envelope specifically for missions in with the Sunday offertory envelopes.

A mission group was formed to oversee the process and to discern which missions should be supported. It was determined that the parish would have a connection with the projects selected so that monies sent could be acknowledged and receipted. Regular reports from the missions, together with photographs were requested so that the Sacred Heart parishioners could know where their monies were being spent and the life changing impact their support was having. A report, inserted in the Sunday Bulletin and display boards with photographs, brought to life the stories some of which were difficult to believe; lives saved, schools supported, latrines built, children receiving a cooked meal a day, homes repaired after devastating storms and so on.

When travelling abroad to spread the word, visiting mission workers, would be invited to speak at Mass and we were fortunate enough to have a number of speakers who were able to share their stories and to thank the parishioners personally for their support.

An overflow of mass intentions and stipends from Sacred Heart parish were sent to the office of the Salesians in Montreal. Salesian priests working in the slums of Port-au-Prince celebrated the masses and the stipends went towards the essential work they were doing.