

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

CATHOLIC CHURCH



“May I take this space to congratulate every member of the parish and say how happy I am to have been the instrument of Providence in helping you erect the grand church of the Nativity of Our Lord.”

— *The Rev. Terence Moore (from the 1939 Dedication Booklet)*

100 YEARS • 1922-2022
A COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY





September 7, 2022

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the grace and love of Jesus Christ Our Lord be with all of you.

It is my great honor and joy as pastor of this great, historic parish to help commemorate this grand jubilee on the 100th anniversary of Nativity of Our Lord.

Fr. Terence Moore received a truly remarkable call — from God himself and through his servant, Archbishop Dowling — to start a parish from the ground up. He accepted the call while still suffering the effects of a near-fatal illness, denying himself for the sake of the people of God here in what we now know as the beautiful, urban Macalaster-Groveland neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota. May the stories, photos, and quotations in these pages inspire us to carry on the great legacy of this great parish, and eagerly and swiftly answer Our Lord's call in our own lives, no matter the earthly cost.

This booklet is a fitting testament to the faith, hope, and love — and good, old fashioned hard work — of so many faithful parishioners and clergymen throughout the past 100 years. Please join me in thanking Christina and Patrick Crow, for their great leadership as chairs of the centennial steering committee, as well as Cathy Brennan, Mary Michel, and George Murphy for their outstanding work on the content of this booklet, and all of the rest of the volunteers and staff members who helped make this commemoration worthy of the occasion.

Our patronal feast day celebrates the unimaginable: the fact that the God of the universe became one of us — born of a woman, in history, in Bethlehem of Judea — so as to die for us, to save us from our sins, and raise us up to our original dignity as sons of the most high. On this day, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Jesus Christ being made present in this place, in history, in St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A.

Nativity of our Lord is indeed a vibrant Catholic community thanks to those who have gone before us and have now taken up the baton 100 years later. And we strongly resolve, by God, to faithfully carry out our mission as disciples of Our Lord for another 100 years and beyond.

May it be done in Christ, through his Blessed Mother Mary. Amen!

Fr. Patrick Hipwell

Sixth Pastor of Nativity of Our Lord



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

August 2022

Reverend Patrick Hipwell
Church of the Nativity of Our Lord
1900 Wellesley Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

Dear Father Hipwell,

Please extend to your parishioners my sincere congratulations as you celebrate the 100th anniversary of your parish. I look forward to being with you on October 1 for the Centennial Celebration Opening Mass.

Considering the rich sacramental life of your parish these past 100 years, there certainly is ample reason to celebrate. My heart is filled with gratitude when I think, for example, of all who have begun the life of faith through baptism, all who have been fed and nurtured at your parish by the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and all of your parishioners who have been sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. I rejoice, moreover, when I think of all who have experienced the Lord's healing in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and all who have walked down the aisle at your parish to vow themselves to one another in Holy Matrimony.

The grace of the sacraments, moreover, has propelled your parishioners to amazing service. I will always be grateful for your parish's exceptional commitment, for example, to the work of passing on the faith to the next generations and reaching out to all those in need.

It would be clear to any astute observer that the Holy Spirit is alive and active in your parish. My hope is that future generations will always recognize the glorious heritage of faith that has been handed down to them at your parish, and will commit to passing on our precious faith to generations to come.

With the promise of my prayers and every good wish, I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

THE PARISH BEGINS

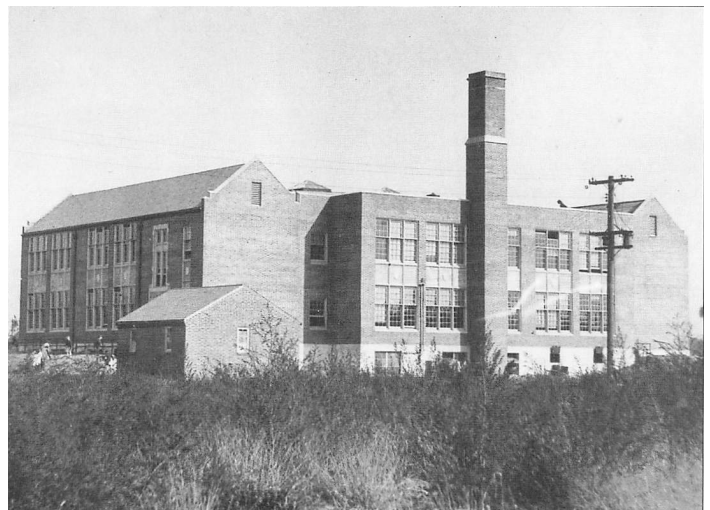
In a letter from Archbishop Dowling dated September 7, 1922 Fr. Terence Moore was given charge of building a new parish in St. Paul, a parish which was to become Nativity of our Lord.

Parish lore has it that the name was Fr. Moore's choice because he received a letter of appointment on the feast of the Nativity of Our Blessed Mother, and he thought it would please her to name the new parish after her son.

Much of the area that was defined as the new parish boundaries was farmland. A map from 1913 shows that the eventual Nativity property was the Wessinger farm. A dairy farm was operated by Maria Wessinger (the daughter) and her husband Balthazar Strobel on land between St. Clair and Jefferson from Fairview to approximately where Nativity playground stands today.

In a letter to Fr. Moore, Archbishop Austin Dowling wrote that many parents in this area were anxious for a school. Father Moore wasted no time getting started. Masses were said just ten days later at the College of St. Catherine Auditorium while construction of the building that served both the church and school, and rectory, began.

Within one year of his appointment, the doors to Nativity School opened in the fall of 1923. Masses were held in the school auditorium space for 16 years until the main church was finished in 1939.



The new Strobel house at 1827 Wellesley

Archbishop's Residence
225 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, Minn.

Sept 7, 1922

My dear Father Moore
I hereby appoint you to the charge of the new parish which ~~has been~~ made from a portion of St. Mary's St. Luke's St. James Parishes in the City of St. Paul. You will please to close your pastorate in Waverly on Sunday September 10th.

I wish you to so manage things as to live in harmony with your neighbors. There are I am told some five hundred families or more in this district and many are very anxious to get a school. My advice would be to begin with a school.

Yours sincerely in Christ
Austin Dowling



PARISH MEMORIES

"I was a girl scout at St. Luke's and came out to Nativity in 1929 to build a fire in the woods next to where the school now stands."

— Jane Warnecke, written in 75th Anniversary Memory Book

"Although Father Moore was known for his thriftiness, he gave each altar boy a shiny fifty cent piece at Christmas."

— Leo Goodrich, 75th Anniversary Book

"I remember my husband telling me he was named after Fr. Moore, who baptized him in Rosemount. His parents were still trying to decide a name on the way to church for the baptism and decided to name him Terence after the parish priest."

— Ethel Hynes, written in 75th Anniversary Memory Book

"I came here on April 11, 1945. I remember that day because I didn't have a car, so I asked the man who delivered the mail if he would give me a ride here."

— Monsignor Clarence Steiner



"We came to Nativity in August 1958 and have found it to be the best parish we've known in our 57 years of marriage."

— Bill and Elaine Malchow, written in 75th Anniversary Memory Book

"Every Sunday night in the winter, Monsignor Steiner would put on his long black overcoat with a big fur collar and go skating at Groveland Park up the street from the rectory. He was quite a skater and the kids marveled at the way he looked in that long black coat doing figure eights!"

— Helen Donahue, 1997

(Helen Donahue was Father Steiner's secretary from 1956-1973 and was interviewed by the Highland Villager during Nativity's 75th Anniversary.)



"It was December 1985 when Lucy and I moved back to Minnesota from Texas. One of the first things we did was register at Nativity parish. Father Kelley immediately welcomed us and brought us into his office to fill out forms. When we were almost done, he slid one more piece of paper in front of us and told us he had signed us up to be co-chairs of the County Fair Tables and Booth Committee and that Jack Barrett (the Chair) would be contacting us! Little did we know that the Table and Booth Committee was the most dreaded of all committees. Lucy and I cheerfully did our three-year rotation and continued to volunteer for various committees over the next 15 years. Father Kelley told us that being on a committee would be a wonderful way to get to know the parish. We couldn't have agreed more!"

— Tim and Lucy Plunkett, 2022



THE CHURCH BUILDING

Made of seven types of granite, the Church of Nativity of Our Lord is designed in the Gothic style, with soaring stone arches and stern vertical lines intended to direct the eyes and thoughts of the faithful upward to God. The upper church seats 900. When it was built, the lower church could seat 1000.

The gold inscription over the altar, Adoro Te Devote Latens Deitas, is the first line of a hymn written by St. Thomas Aquinas, "God with Hidden Majesty Lies in Presence Here." The four stained glass windows in the sanctuary depict what are referred to as the social sacraments, Matrimony, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

At the rear of the church, over the choir loft, another window signifies the Holy Spirit, with the central symbol of a dove radiating light. Surrounding it are symbols for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; clockwise from the middle right; a sunflower for Fear of the Lord, hands in prayer for Piety, book and candle for Knowledge, a sword and shield for Fortitude, uplifted hand and stole for Counsel, open book and eyes for Understanding, and a lamp for Wisdom, the last and greatest gift.

Along the outer walls of the church, the symbols of the apostles are painted in gold on white shields. The stained-glass windows on both sides of the church were only partially complete at the time of the dedication in 1939. Windows on the west of Prior sidetrack the seasons in the liturgical calendar. Opposite them, the windows represent the seven canonical hours: Matins and Laud, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline.

Outside, over the main door on Stanford, is carved a Nativity scene with adoring angels on either side. The Latin inscription carved in stone at the top of the building means, "Come, let us adore Christ the King made Man." The Prior Avenue entrance displays a stone carving of the root of Jesse, with a tiny Madonna and Child just above.

The building's architect was Mr. Hills, a partner in O'Meara and Hills. McGough Brothers served as the general contractor with bids totaling \$307,554.25 and \$5000 for decorating. Aside from tuckpointing and routine maintenance, the church did not require significant renovation for more than 50 years. Then the wear and tear became evident, and work needed to be done. One of the biggest renovation challenges is incorporating the latest technology into a historic structure without jeopardizing its architectural integrity.

In the fall of 1993 work began on a major remodeling whose primary purpose was to convert the lower church to a more flexible meeting and social space. It also included the addition of an elevator, new heating and air conditioning, and a tunnel connecting church and school.

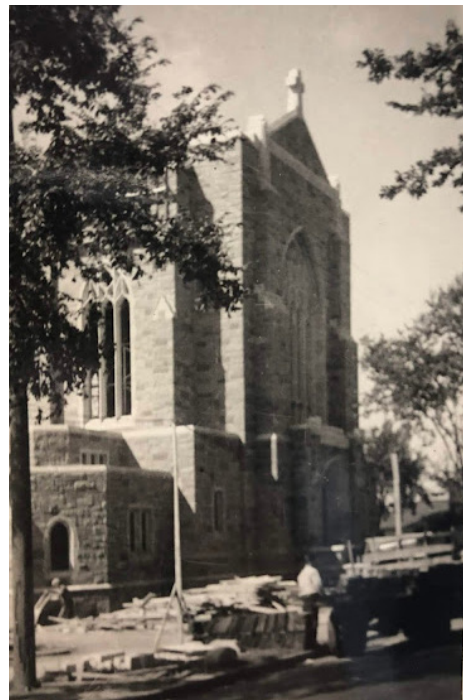
Steiner Hall affectionately dubbed "Steiner's Diner" was officially opened in February 1994, with a reception honoring Msgr. Clarence Steiner's fiftieth anniversary. 800 attended.

In 2000 further tuckpointing, stonework around the windows, and a new roof were completed. In 2008 a major remodeling and addition was added to the school. At the dedication of the new school addition, a new school stone monument was donated by John and Catherine Michel to match the entrance stone monument they also donated for the church.

Water intrusion required major repair of the stained-glass windows in the church building which began in 2014. Quarry tile was added to make a cross aisle in 2018, lighting was upgraded, and pews were refinished.

In 2019 further work was required on the east side of the church. As we celebrate our 100th anniversary, we are hopeful that work on the water intrusion damage will begin in January 2023.





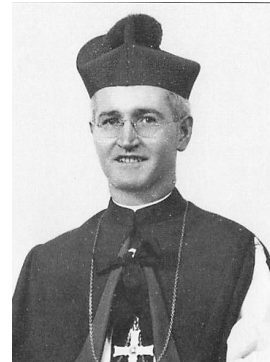
PASTORS

Nativity of Our Lord parish has been blessed with six pastors over its 100 years.

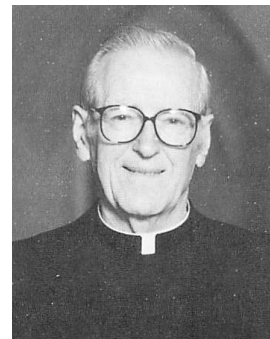
REVEREND TERENCE MOORE (1869-1948) founded and led the parish for its first 26 years. When Archbishop John Ireland visited Dublin in 1887 to recruit priests and settlers, Terence Moore was among the volunteers and began studies at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. An illness forced him to return to St. Paul and his condition worsened. Papal dispensation was sought so Archbishop Ireland could ordain him even though he was 15 months short of the required canonical age. He recovered but nursed a stiff knee all his life.



ARCHBISHOP JAMES J. BYRNE (1908-1996) was born in St. Paul and was ordained after attending the St. Paul Seminary. He received a doctorate in theology at the University of Louvain in Belgium and spent the next decade teaching philosophy and theology at the College of St. Thomas, the College of St. Catherine, and the St. Paul Seminary. In 1947 he was consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of St. Paul which allowed him to assist or stand in for Archbishop Murray who had been seriously hurt in a car accident. Bishop Byrne served as pastor of Nativity parish from 1948 until 1956, when he was appointed Bishop of Boise, Idaho. He became the first St. Paul native to become an Archbishop when named to that post in Dubuque.

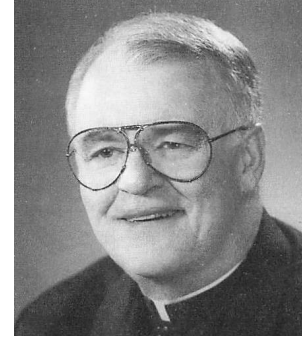


MONSIGNOR CLARENCE STEINER (1918-1998) was born in St. Paul and began his seminary studies in Louvain, Belgium which were interrupted by the Nazi advance across Europe. He completed his studies at St. Paul Seminary and was ordained in 1944. He served as assistant pastor to Fr. Moore and Auxiliary Bishop Byrne and was made parish administrator when the latter was made Bishop of Boise. He was made pastor of Nativity parish in 1964 and retired as pastor in 1986 but continued to serve as associate pastor until 1994 when he retired from active ministry except for hearing confessions and visiting the sick.

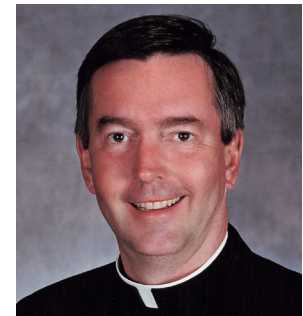


PASTORS (CONTINUED)

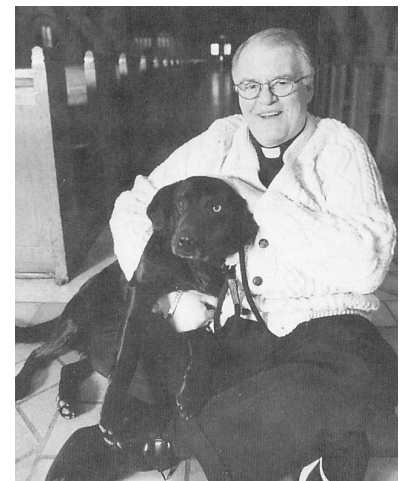
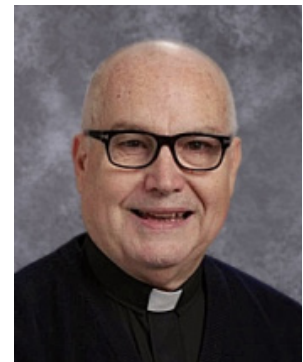
REVEREND PATRICK LANNAN (1941-1998) was born in Minneapolis and attended Nazareth Hall and St. Paul Seminary and was ordained in 1968. He did graduate studies at Catholic University of America and at the University of Notre Dame. After assignments at St. Stephen's in Anoka, chemical dependency counseling at Anoka State Hospital and chaplaincy at the Anoka County Jail, Fr. Lannan came to Nativity in 1975 where he was appointed administrator in 1985 and pastor in 1986. He was active in higher Catholic education and served on several boards. He died while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

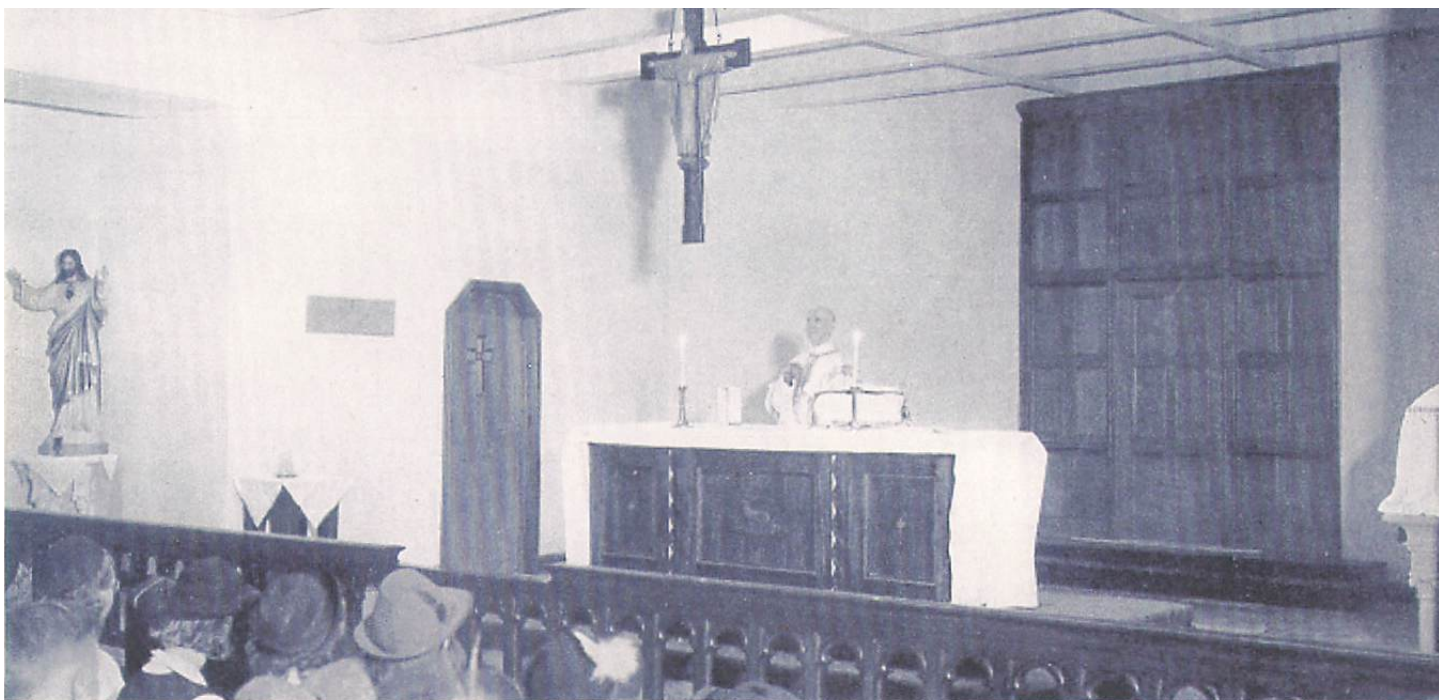


BISHOP PETER CHRISTENSEN (1952-) was born in Pasadena, CA and ordained in 1985 after completing his studies at the St. Paul Seminary. In 1992 he earned a Master of Applied Spirituality from the University of San Francisco. After four years at St. Olaf Parish in Minneapolis, he became spiritual director of St. John Vianney College Seminary and was named Rector of the seminary in 1992. He was appointed pastor of Nativity of Our Lord Church where he served 8 years (1999-2007) before Pope Benedict XVI appointed him the 10 th Bishop of the Diocese of Superior, WI in 2007. He currently serves as Bishop of the Diocese of Boise.



REVEREND PATRICK HIPWELL (1950-) was born in Hastings, NE on January 1, 1950 before moving with his family to South Minneapolis and attending DeLaSalle High School. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 4, 1977 by Archbishop John Roach at the Cathedral of St. Paul. He served as an assistant priest at St. Columba in St. Paul; St. John the Baptist in New Brighton; St. Therese in Deephaven, where he later served as Parochial Administrator; Our Lady of Grace in Edina; and Maternity of Mary in St. Paul. He was named Pastor of St. Anne in Hamel in 1988 and then in 1994 at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Minnetonka, during which time he served as parochial administrator for St. Anne's and later as Canonical Administrator at John Ireland School. He was named pastor of Nativity of Our Lord on December 15, 2007. Fr. Patrick was also appointed to the Presbyteral Assembly Steering Committee in 1997 and to his second term as Secretary of the Archdiocese's College of Consultors in 2018.





Fr. Moore celebrates Mass facing the people in the lower church

THE ALTARS

Parishioners may be surprised to learn that the first wooden altar in the downstairs school before there was a church faced the congregation which was not common in the Western Catholic world in 1922. In fact, Nativity of Our Lord was the first church in the United States to do so and this configuration required special permission from Archbishop John Murray. This custom was more universal in the early church unless there was inadequate space for the priest to turn around which frequently happened in the catacombs and small chapels. Altars placed facing the congregation were not seen except in Rome and a few places in Germany during the 20's. After Vatican II it became common for altars across the United States to face the congregation.

A temporary front altar was added to the upstairs church in the late 60's, but removed in 1983, when the sanctuary was restored back to its original look. That high altar was cut down and placed in the Eucharistic Chapel and the pink altar from the Eucharistic Chapel was moved to be the high altar. Long time parishioner Laurie Murphy remembers the day well when the matching pink slab of marble arrived to be installed for the back of the high altar.

"I was the project manager for Murphy Rigging and Erecting at the time and I was with Father Christensen as the large pink slab was being delivered," Laurie recalls. "One of our men noticed a big crack much to Father's dismay as it couldn't be repaired. About the same time, our men also noticed that the pink altar stone itself was thin and weak and would not support the large altar stone on top. Murphy Rigging proceeded to build a 4 x 4 pedestal under the altar. The stone currently rests on the pedestal not the side pieces."

When the lower level of the church was being remodeled to become Steiner Hall, Father Lannan gave away the old altar server chairs and wood altar. Deacon Jerry Devine was there that day and took a chair and the wood altar. Jerry tells the story that a neighbor was walking down the alley as Jerry was making the altar into a workbench for himself in the garage. When the neighbor saw it, he remarked, "Well I hope it's been 'de-holy-ized!'"

During the pandemic Mass was held daily in the rectory chapel and live streamed to parishioners. The chapel altar was built by Fr. Andrew Brinkman's brother and the centerpiece with a carved lamb is from the original wood altar used by Fr. Moore for Mass in the auditorium of the school.

FR. TERENCE MOORE HERITAGE ROOM

John and Catherine Michel wanted to honor Father Terence Moore, the founder of Nativity of Our Lord parish. In 2008 they met with Father Patrick Hipwell. It was decided that the old baptistry would be transformed into the Heritage Room. It would display the many relics in Nativity's possession, complete with their reliquaries for meditation and quiet prayer time.

Nativity has 200 relics and one hundred of those are first class relics. Nativity has two very rare and significant relics: Two slivers from the Crucifixion Cross of Jesus and a piece of the veil of the Blessed Mother. The relics are changed each month and new ones placed for the saint whose feast days are in the current month. Many of the relics and their reliquaries were donated to Nativity by Father Patrick Lannan as well as Robert Berendt, former Sacristan now deceased, and his wife Patricia.

A bronze relief of Father Moore is displayed in the Heritage Room as well as statues of St. Paul, patron saint of our capital city, and St. John Vianney, patron saint of priests.



ADORATION AND PRAYER

Perpetual Adoration began on May 1st, 1994, and was continuous for 24 hours a day until the COVID lockdown in 2020. Prior to COVID, there were approximately 250 Scheduled Adorers and 100 Subs on any given day. Today, Nativity has 92 Scheduled Adorers and is looking forward to rebuilding the Devotion to its Pre-Covid levels and hours.

Fr. Patrick Lannan who was pastor during the opening of the Eucharistic Chapel shared this comment with parishioners. "I believe that Perpetual Adoration is the best thing that I have ever supported in my priesthood and that it is the strongest, most beneficial activity that could go on in our Nativity family, superseded only by the Mass itself."



LITURGICAL MINISTRY

Participating in liturgical celebrations at Nativity of Our Lord is a great privilege and responsibility. Parishioners have had the opportunity to serve the community in this meaningful way throughout its history.

Liturgical Ministry includes Lectors, Greeters, Eucharistic Ministers, and Altar Servers. The first Altar Servers studied Latin with Father Morin who insisted that they memorize all the responses in Latin. Anyone caught mumbling was thrown off the list. Saturdays with weddings were the most coveted assignment since that often meant a \$1 tip.

In 1995 Nativity welcomed its first ever class of girl altar servers who were trained by Sister Annabelle. She ordered their white cassocks from Belgium and the \$1000 cost was paid for by NCCW. Today, about 50 girls and boys from 6th grade on are trained and some continue throughout their high school years.

Ministers of the Arts and Environment enhance the liturgical experience by creating an atmosphere of beauty and elegance. Church cleaners are the unsung heroes working tirelessly to clean, replace candles, and refresh flowers.

Nativity of Our Lord Church is well-known for its beautiful liturgical celebrations. Nativity is blessed with Music Ministers including cantors and adult and children's choirs who glorify the Lord through their beautiful voices.

Nativity Church is known for its wonderful acoustics and sound production and many performances (including other community choirs) hold recitals here.



RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS

Through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), non-Catholics interested in joining the Catholic Church are provided with a structured opportunity to immerse themselves in our faith, reflect on their commitment to Catholic values, traditions and practices and prepare to become full members of the faith. The program culminates when participants are welcomed into the Catholic faith during the Easter Vigil liturgy. Nativity has helped many seeking to join the Catholic faith.



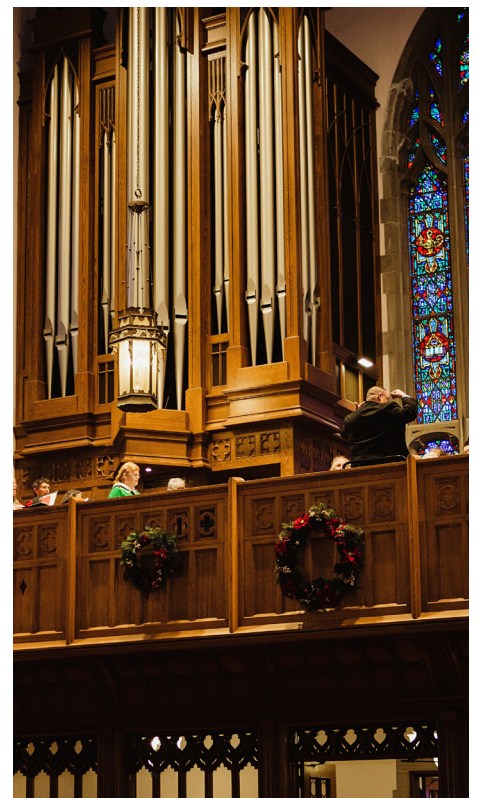
Art and Barbara Bowman shared their story of Christian Initiation: “In the year 2000 I left behind my vocation as a Lutheran pastor and Barbara her Protestant identity to join Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church where we experienced the reality of the real presence of Christ in Holy Communion, the reality of an apostolic priesthood and the reality of the communion of saints.” He went on to say that being members of Nativity was more than a good deal, it was “the real deal.” Barb assists with our collection of relics.

THE SITZMANN ORGAN

The original church organ, after 70 years, could no longer be repaired. An electronic organ was used temporarily until a solution for a new organ could be found. In 2004, thanks to the generosity of the Sitzmann family their gift to Nativity was our beautiful new pipe organ. Their hope was that the organ would, “continue the fine tradition of giving thanks and praise for the honor and glory of God through music.”

A committee from the parish commissioned Casavant Freres of Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec to design and build a new pipe organ for Nativity Church. Fr. Peter Christensen, the pastor at the time, along with Casavant representatives collaborated in designing a case that complemented the neo-gothic style of the church.

The organ was built at Casavant headquarters and it took two years to build. It was then dismantled and rebuilt in the Nativity choir loft. Steve Rosenberg, the organist at Nativity, helped the tuners “voice” each of the 2,882 pipes. The Sitzmann organ was blessed and dedicated on Sunday June 10, 2007.



OUR LADY, SEAT OF WISDOM

On the Southeast side of the church is a beautiful statue of Mary holding Jesus in her arms. The statue is affixed to the brick exterior of the sacristy several feet above the ground with benches placed beneath the statue. The Our Lady Seat of Wisdom statue is appropriately placed where it will keep watch over all the school children and honor all the teachers that have taught the children over the years.

Jim and Joanne Murphy, in 2002, donated the statue and benches to honor her mother Dorothy Doerr who taught at Nativity from 1958 to 1971.



ASSIGNED CLERGY

Parochial Vicars

Rev. T.D. O'Connell	1923-1926
Rev. Leon Klein	1924-1924
Rev. P. J. McGuire	1926-1926
Rev. R. E. Cogwin	1926-1929
Rev. John A. Phelan	1927-1931
Rev. A. J. Schladweiler	1929-1930
Rev. M. J. Lawler	1929-1932
Rev. E. C. Trainor	1930-1932
Rev. F. Wilkins	1931-1933
Rev. I. A. Hirman	1932-1935
Rev. M. G. Harrington	1932-1935
Rev. J. McKeever	1933-1933
Rev. T. V. Mullane	1933-1934
Rev. J. E. Esser	1934-1935
Rev. John Cullinan	1935-1935
Rev. H. Theissen	1935-1935
Rev. W. Nolan	1935-1937
Rev. W. P. Delaney	1935-1938
Rev. M. J. Larkin	1935-1938
Rev. R. O'Connor	1937-1938
Rev. R. Hacker	1938-1938
Rev. J. N. Siebenand	1938-1938
Rev. P. Bussard	1938-1948
Rev. G. Hughes	1938-1939
Rev. R. Morin	1938-1941
Rev. W. Seefeldt	1939-1941
Rev. J. A. Ward	1941-1942
Rev. T. J. Robertson	1941-1942
Rev. V. Hope	1942-1942
Rev. R. J. Reed	1942-1945
Rev. J. Fleming	1942-1943
Rev. E. Grandpre	1943-1943
Rev. R. Blatz	1943-1944
Rev. C. J. Steiner	1945-1994
(Administrator)	1956-1964
(Pastor)	1964-1986
Rev. R. Muchlestein	1946-1947
Rev. R. G. Dunn	1947-1954
Rev. T. J. Conroy	1948-1948
Rev. M. J. Lawler	1948-1949
Rev. James Walz	1950-1954
Rev. John Mitchel	1954-1954
Rev. Gilbert Endres	1955-1955
Rev. Alfred Skluzacek	1955-1955
Rev. Fredric Flemming	1955-1963
Rev. Donald Conroy	1955-1955

Rev. James Schoenberger	1957-1965
Rev. John McGrath	1957-1965
Rev. Kenneth Pierre	1963-1964
Rev. Ambrose Mahon	1965-1970
Rev. Elmer Pierre	1966-1969
Rev. Eugene Abbott	1968-1971
Rev. Richard Podvin	1969-1970
Rev. Bernard Yetzer	1970-1973
Rev. George Freeman	1971-1974
Rev. Eugene Tiffany	1973-1974
Rev. Patrick Lannan	1974-1975
(Administrator)	1985-1986
(Pastor)	1986-1998
Rev. John Kelley	1977-1999
Rev. Richard O'Connor	1986-1994
Rev. James Livingston	1994-1995
Rev. William Baer	1996-1999
(Administrator)	1998-1999
Rev. Thomas Margevicius	1999-2001
Rev. David Barrett	2001-2002
Rev. Christopher Wenthe	2003-2005
Rev. Jim Liekius	2005-2007
Rev. John Bauer	2008-2010
Rev. Joe Bambanek	2010-2012
Rev. Mark Joppa	2012-2013
Rev. Andrew Brinkman	2013-2015
Rev. John Powers	2015-2018
Rev. Nick Hagen	2018-2021
Rev. William Duffert	2021-present

Permanent Deacons

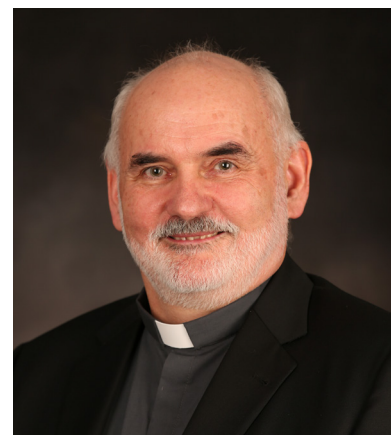
Deacon Gerald Devine	1986-2001
Deacon Russ Kocemba	2012-present
Deacon Don Tienter	2018-present

Pastors

Rev. Terence Moore	1922-1948
Archbishop James Byrne	1948-1956
Msgr. Clarence Steiner	1964-1986
Rev. Patrick Lannan	1986-1998
Bishop Peter Christensen	1999-2007
Rev. Patrick Hipwell	2007-present

Pictured at right (from top):

Fr. Bill Duffert and Deacons Russ Kocemba and Don Tienter, and Gerald Devine



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Sr. Annunciata 1923- 1927
Sr. Resignata May 1977-1932
Sr. Bernarda O'Reilly 1932-1934
Sr. Cecile Latourneau 1934-1942
Sr. Carolyn Wittman 1942-1958
Sr. Joseph Helene Corrigan 1958-1964
Sr. Mary Margaret Deeney 1964-1971
Sr. Victoria Houle 1971-1976
Mr. James Griesgraber 1976-1989
Ms. Margo Weiberg 1989-2010
Ms. Kate Wollan 1993-present

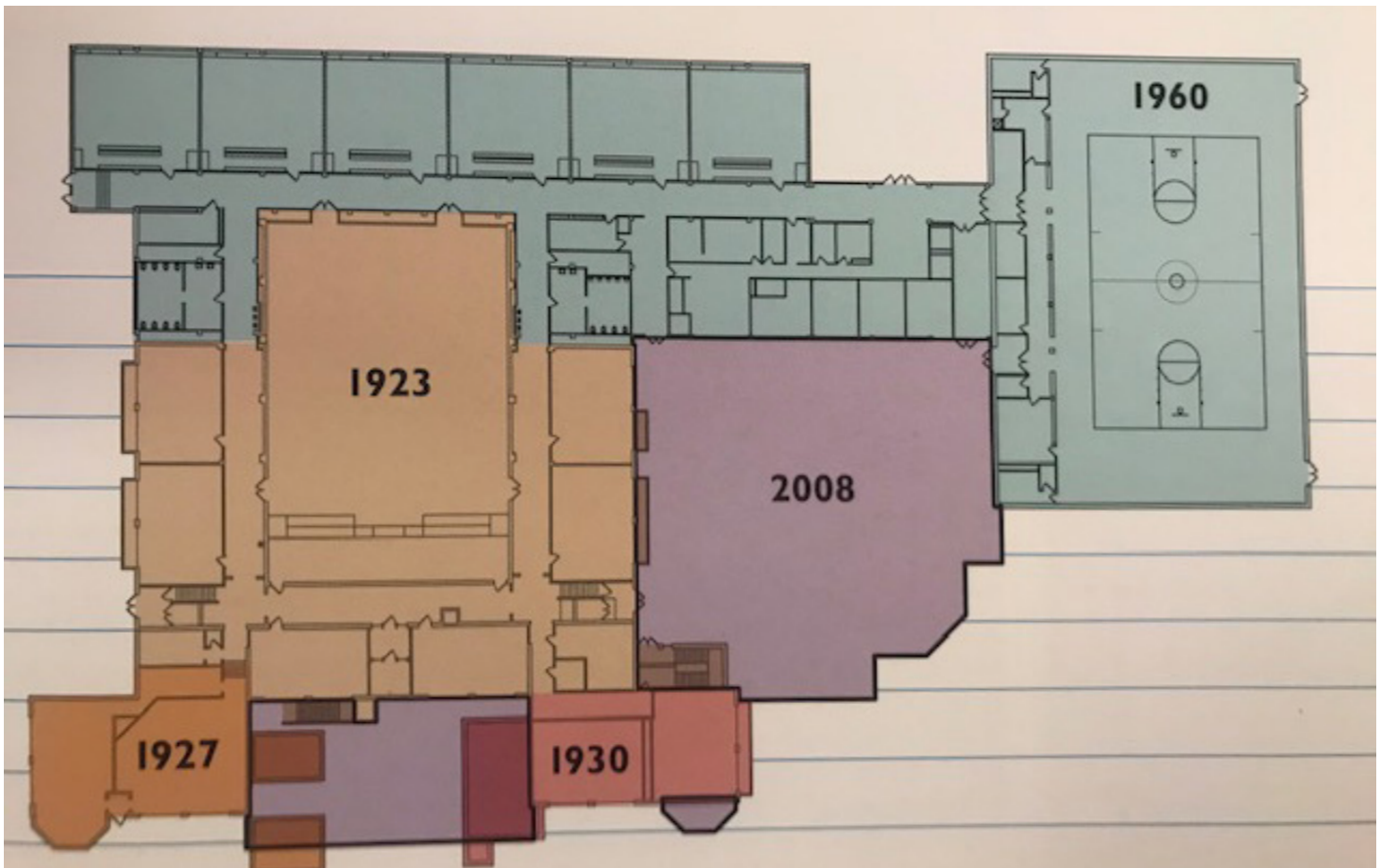


PARISH TRUSTEES

Edward P. Langan
J.P. Horrigan
John W. Farrell
James F. Murphy
M.J. McGough
Edward F. Jansen
M.P. O'Connell
Eugene Huot

Roman R. Sevenich
Gaylord Glarner
Edward Murphy Jr.
Robert Berendt
Eugene Minnea
Thomas Engle
Frances Laufle
Thomas Galligan

Patricia Oxley
Stewart Laird
Mickey Nickelson
Dan Flanagan
Gerald Brennan
Christina Crow (2022-)
Tom Tucci (2022-)



NATIVITY MEN'S CLUB

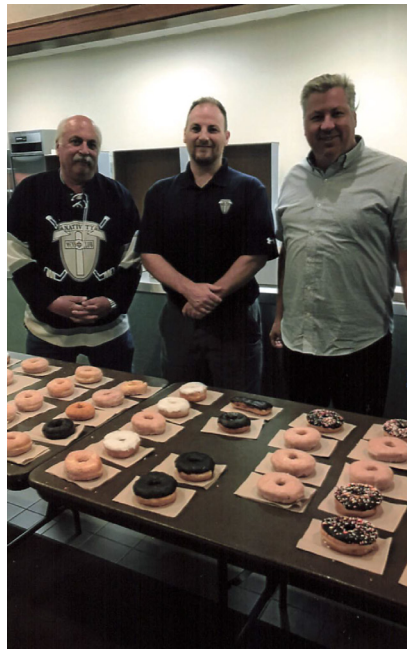
The Nativity Men's Club traces its history back to the early days of the parish and has provided a long-standing vehicle for all men of the parish to become actively involved. "Pro Liberis" or "For the Children" is the foundation for both membership and events. The Men's Club hosts both fundraising and fellowship events throughout the year in support of the parish school as well as the Nativity Early Learning Center (NELC).

The Men's Club meets regularly to plan, define and execute events such as the Fall Pig roast, Christmas Wreath sales, and Christmas Tree lot. Jointly, with the children of Nativity School, they sell and deliver over 5000 wreaths, swags, and garlands on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. The Men's Club tree lot continues the Holiday tradition by selling nearly 2000 Christmas trees and offering holiday cheer from their iconic trailer.

Other Men's Club events that have become 'mainstays' for many years are the once-a-month Donut Sundays, Fr. John Kelley Cribbage Tournament, and the Men's Club Sports shirt stag. Further, the Men's Club celebrates the Lenten season with two parish fish fries plus an end-of-the-school-year BBQ and Picnic.

All these annual events have provided an average \$75,000 stipend to our school, the NELC, and as a special 'resource' such as Faith Formation and the Nativity Scouting programs.

All men of the parish are automatically members of the Men's Club. Showing active support for the school programs and attending Holy Mass will leave a "lasting positive impression" on Nativity's children, according to (former Pastor) Bishop Peter Christiansen and (the late) Fr. Bill Baer former Nativity Parochial Vicar. The Nativity Men's Club helps our children follow that path.



NATIVITY COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

The Altar and Rosary Society was founded in 1922 and their first meeting was a tea and reception to honor Father Moore. They collected \$141 which was to buy linens for Father Moore's home on Lincoln Avenue where he lived before the rectory was built in 1923. In 1975 the Altar and Rosary Society was renamed the Nativity Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) to reflect its mission more accurately.

With a special devotion to Mary, the mission of the NCCW is to worship and glorify God through volunteer service and social and educational activities. The NCCW supports the ongoing spiritual ministries of the parish, such as the prayer line, the prayer shawl ministry, maintaining all parish altar linens and providing funeral luncheons for the deceased of the parish.

The NCCW hosts a variety of annual events, including Trivia Night, Memorial Mass, Madonna Mass and Reception, Afternoon Tea, and a Christmas Giving Tree to share gifts with Catholic Charities. NCCW also sponsor a bloodmobile two times a year. New events have been added to meet the changing needs of the parish, including a European-style Christmas Market and Fireside Chats.

The NCCW pays for altar breads and flowers and supports many other worthy causes of the Nativity community. Every woman in the parish is a treasured member of the NCCW.





Some Members of the Nativity Men's Club



Some Members of the Altar and Rosary Society

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As we look back 100 years to the days of Nativity's founding, the parallels between 1922 and 2022 are striking. Housing was tight, food prices were rising, and racial tensions flared. The nation was also recovering from what was, until then, the worst pandemic in human history. More World War I soldiers died from so-called Spanish flu than in combat. An estimated 50 million died worldwide; in Minnesota alone the death toll was 12,000.

A century later, that many and more Minnesotans have died from COVID 19, a pandemic we've battled for over two years now, with new variants continuing to emerge.

When it hit, in the early months of 2020, we had no vaccine and no known treatments. The only available way to "stop the spread" was to shut down any venue where people gathered. Archbishop Bernard Hebda ordered in-person liturgy attendance to be suspended beginning March 19 for at least two weeks, and in-person school was also suspended. Governor Tim Walz ordered "Stay Home Minnesota" on March 28, 2020. Nativity school and parish leadership went into overdrive to switch over to virtual distance learning and livestreamed Masses.

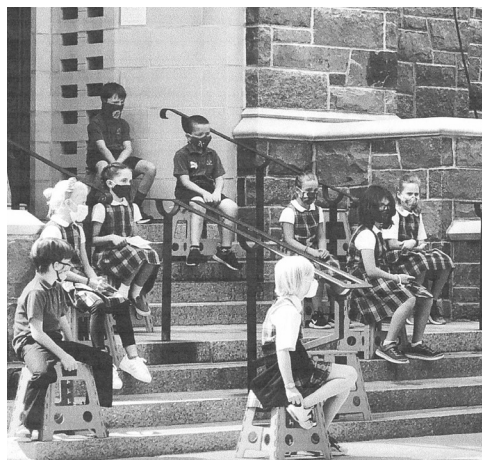
Teachers worked 18-hour days to adjust their teaching methods to a new format and assemble lesson packets to send home to students, dole out iPads and Chromebooks for students who needed them, and dream up creative ways to keep students engaged and connected. Parents rallied.

Pastor Patrick Hipwell and Parochial Vicar Nick Hagen got the livestream cameras up and running and learned to preach to a camera. They distributed Communion and heard confessions outside the parish rectory and school entrance.

As months wore on, worship rules and practices evolved. When public Mass was permitted once more in June, pews were roped off for social distancing. Reservations were required – at first only 24 family groups permitted per Mass, then later 48, before being dropped in mid-July. Ushers met parishioners at the door to seat them. Communion was distributed at exits as attendees left the church to avoid aerosol transmission of the virus, and there was no communal singing.

Booklets and hymnals were removed, and pews wiped down after each Mass; researchers had not yet discovered that the virus was largely not transmitted through surfaces. Masks were mandatory, and many parishioners continued to wear them even once the requirement was dropped. Some continued livestreaming Mass from home out of caution.

The Nativity County Fair committee reluctantly decided to cancel the 2020 live event and do a virtual live auction evening celebration.



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, principal Kate Wollan and her team geared up for a return to in-person learning in the fall of 2020, with an option for students to remain in distance learning. The school was transformed: water fountains (chronically laden with germs, as established in numerous Science Fair projects) were removed and replaced with filling stations for water bottles brought from home.

Parent volunteers showed up to tape one-way traffic instructions in the hallways, space out desks for social distancing and haul out the old bench-style lunch tables, replacing them with eight-foot round tables.

Music, band, art, and science, whose classrooms had no windows for ventilation, were held outside at tables sent up under tents. Inside, students, teachers and staff wore masks for safety. Students in the classroom were kept in small cohorts, so that when the inevitable infections occurred, as few students as possible would need to be sent home to quarantine.

January of 2021 brought a much-awaited vaccine, and educators were among the first in line, a significant protection for Nativity faculty and staff. The pandemic dragged on into a second school year, when vaccines were finally approved for children. New variants peaked and receded. Amazingly, Principal Wollan reports that so far no Nativity student, teacher, staff member or parent has gotten sick enough to require hospitalization for COVID.

The summer of 2022 brought Nativity a rush of weddings that had been postponed during the worst of the pandemic, and excitement for a return to a live Nativity County Fair. We celebrate our Centennial in the shadow of public health warnings about new, more transmissible variants of the COVID virus.



THE SACRAMENTS

“The Sacraments are Jesus Christ’s presence in us.”
— Pope Francis

From our parish’s inception in September of 1922 to August 8, 2022, Nativity Parish has had:

- 12,724 Baptisms
- 11,713 First Holy Communions
- 11,536 Confirmations
- 4238 Marriages
- 4904 Deaths

BAPTISM

At right: Cecilia Joan Copp
Parents: Stephen and Nellie Copp
Baptized by Fr. Patrick Hipwell on July 12, 2022

RECONCILIATION

Second Grade students are introduced to the priest by their parents to make their First Reconciliation. At the conclusion of the sacrament each child lights a candle symbolizing how they can light up the world with God’s love.



HOLY COMMUNION

“Thank you to Mrs. Krieger who helped prepare me for my First Holy Communion. I was excited and nervous to receive the Eucharist, so it made me happy to have my family around me.”

— Ben Junker (pictured at right)

“We are very grateful for Nativity’s commitment to our Catholic Faith. The school and parish do a beautiful job preparing our children for the sacraments, as well as encouraging and celebrating their participation in the life of the church.”

— Billy and Therese Junker, May 7, 2002
(pictured at right)

Carol Reilly Stupka and Marilyn Caniff Laramy
First Communion at Nativity, 1931
(pictured below)

Carol Stupka’s Great Granddaughters
Lucy Nelson and Annie Michel
First Communion at Nativity, 2022
(pictured at right)



CONFIRMATION

RCIA candidate Jonathan Frisby was confirmed by Fr. Patrick Hipwell at the Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 16, 2022 (pictured at right)



MATRIMONY

Werner and Bobbie Amerongen
(pictured at right)
Married on May 31, 1947 by Fr. Moore

“Beginnings are so important. Nativity was my only parish until I was married. My school years were 1928 to 1936. The dear nuns taught us to love, pray, forgive, obey, the importance of the Mass and the sacraments. With these tools, which were reinforced at home, we were sent on life’s journey. Surely, such good beginnings should lead to blessed endings...”

— Bobbie Jeanne Berreau Amerongen



HOLY ORDERS

One of our native sons, the now-Reverend Mr. John Rumpza (pictured at right), was ordained by Bishop Joseph Williams and made solemn promises of chastity, simplicity, and obedience to Archbishop Bernard Hebda and his successors at the transitional diaconate ordination at the Basilica of St. Mary on Saturday, May 14, 2022.



ANOINTING OF THE SICK

This Sacrament of the Church instituted by Christ gives spiritual aid and strength to individuals who are ill, facing serious illness or aging. Anointing may be repeated if an illness worsens. An Anointing Mass and lunch are held twice a year at Nativity.



NATIVITY COUNTY FAIR

“The One and Only Genuine Original Nativity County Fair” — this was the name given to the very first Nativity County Fair held on September 20, 1975.

“One of the goals of the fair was to get as many people as possible to participate in planning, setting up and working the fair,” said Roger Laufle. I wanted everyone to feel this is their parish. Priests come and go but some parishioners live in Nativity for their entire lives and the parish belongs to them.”

Almost 50 years later the goal of the Nativity County Fair remains the same. Old and new parishioners, school kids and families all come together to work and enjoy the Nativity County Fair. However, there are no longer helicopter rides flying west to the Mississippi River and back to the Nativity playground and there are no hot air balloon rides as in 1975 and 1976.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the traditional Nativity County Fair was replaced in 2020 with a new virtual event. Our incredibly generous community of Nativity school families, parishioners, alumni, grandparents, and friends joined together as One Nativity to participate in the first-ever virtual Nativity Live and Silent Auction in support of our beloved parish and school.

The One and Only Genuine Original Nativity County Fair returned in September of 2021 with much anticipation and a few modifications. The 3-day fair was held entirely outdoors, and the Live and Silent Auction Dinner was scheduled for the following spring. Fairgoers enjoyed “two nights under the Lights” with food, music, games, and rides.



KEY DATES IN HISTORY

September 7, 1922	Archbishop Austin Dowling of St. Paul sends a letter to Fr. Terence Moore in Waverly, Minnesota appointing him to come establish a new parish in St. Paul, which is to become Nativity of Our Lord.
September 17, 1922	Fr. Moore says Sunday Mass for his new parishioners in the auditorium of the College of St. Catherine (now known as the University of St. Catherine).
August 1923	Mass is said for the first time in the new school building and Fr. Moore moves into the new parish house on Prior Ave.
September 14, 1923	Nativity of Our Lord School opens its doors to 311 students, while 54 more were admitted before school is out the next summer.
1927	A new wing is added to the school to accommodate the rise in students, to almost 700.
1930	A second wing is added to the school.
1932	Nativity celebrates its 10th anniversary, still without a church building but with a school enrollment of 923 children.
August 29, 1937	Fr Terence Moore, Fr. W.P. Delaney, Fr. M.J. Larkin, Fr. R. O'Connor, and sisters from the school break ground for the Nativity church building. Their spades slice into dirt directly underneath the future location of the high altar.
May 15, 1938	Archbishop John Murray lays the cornerstone for the new church (pictured).
April 16, 1939	Archbishop Murray presides over dedication ceremonies, preaches at Mass, and confirms 300 people that same afternoon.
December 7, 1941	The U.S. enters World War II after Japanese forces bomb Pearl Harbor. Nativity will send 669 members to serve in the war.
April 1945	Fr. Clarence Steiner is assigned to Nativity of Our Lord.
1946	Nativity pays \$1,600 for two lots on Wellesley Ave., the site of the future convent.
January 1948	Fr. Terence Moore dies at the age of 78 after 55 years of priesthood. He leaves the parish with no debt.
February 6, 1948	Auxiliary Bishop James Byrne is appointed pastor.
1952	The new convent on Wellesley is complete.
1954	The first wave of baby boomers is in grade school and Nativity has to close kindergarten as rooms were needed for the upper grades.
June 16, 1956	Auxiliary Bishop James Byrne is appointed bishop of Boise, Idaho.
August 17, 1956	Fr. Clarence Steiner is appointed parish administrator.
1958-59 school year	Enrollment at Nativity School is 1,040. Classrooms on the first floor have as many as 52 students and classrooms on the second floor 43-48. The library and cafeteria are being used as temporary classrooms.
1959	A major fund appeal is launched to expand the school for an anticipated additional 200 students. More than \$1,000,000 is pledged over a three-year period.



1959 to 1960	Six houses — three to the west of 1852 Stanford and three on Wellesley — are acquired for approximately \$20,000 each to make room for a larger playground. The houses are sold for a total of \$11,263 and moved.
1961	A new school addition, including 12 classrooms, administrative space, and a new gymnasium with a wood floor was completed.
May 15, 1964	Fr. Steiner is appointed pastor.
1965	As permitted by the second Vatican Council, Nativity celebrates its first Mass in English.
September 10, 1972	Nativity parish celebrates its golden anniversary.
1975	Parishioners were asked to host refugee families from Cambodia. Some parishioners served as mentors for years teaching English.
September 20, 1975	The first Nativity County Fair is held, marking the beginning of a longstanding and continuing tradition.
1975	Fr. Patrick Lannan comes to Nativity as Associate Pastor.
1977	Fr. John Kelley comes to Nativity as Associate Pastor.
1979	Confessionals are remodeled to facilitate traditional and face-to-face confessions for the new Rite of Reconciliation.
1980	Nativity School begins the tradition of providing Thanksgiving meals and Christmas gifts to members of Holy Rosary Parish in Minneapolis.
July-October 1981	Parishioners contribute \$53,700 to restore stained glass windows in the church. Work is completed in April of 1983.
1985	Fr. Lannan is named parochial administrator following Msgr. Steiner's heart surgery.
1986	Fr. Steiner retires as pastor but continues to serve as associate pastor. Fr. Lannan is appointed pastor.
1986	Deacon Gerald Devine joins Nativity staff. Gerald is the first Nativity parishioner to attend Deacon training and has since retired after 21 years of service.
1988	Nativity celebrates 50 years of the Church building.
November 28, 1988	Loaves and Fishes parishioner groups begin making and serving meals for the Dorothy Day Center.
December 4, 1988	Bishop Robert Carlson consecrates the Church at a special liturgy, during which the crosses and candles on the front side walls are anointed with the Oil of Chrism. A relic of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque is placed in the altar stone of the main altar. A church cannot be consecrated until it is paid for, but this celebration is more than 40 years overdue.
September 1990	Nativity assumes operation of the Friendship Day Care Center which was leasing unused classroom space at Nativity School, renaming it the Nativity Early Learning Center (NELC). The NELC fosters a love of learning through an age-appropriate curriculum of social, academic, and creative skills (pictured).



1992	Nativity choir is chosen from 223 parishes in the Archdiocese to travel to Rome, where they perform for Pope John Paul II and an audience of 13,000. They were honored with a private audience with the Pope, during which he tells them, "You sound wonderful."
February 20, 1994	The first reception in Steiner Hall is held in honor of Msgr. Steiner's 50th anniversary, with 800 in attendance. Msgr. Steiner retires at 76 years old from most duties but continues to hear Confessions and visit the sick.
May 1, 1994	In a special ceremony, Nativity opens a Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Volunteers commit one hour a week, so the Holy Sacrament is attended 24 hours a day, year-round. The Chapel was originally equipped with eight pews and kneelers from the old Nativity Convent Chapel.
1994-95 school year	Nativity trains 44 girls to become the first female altar servers at the parish.
Christmas 1994	Florence Regan donated a new manger scene between the rectory and the church in memory of her husband.
June 18, 1996	Fr. Bill Baer comes to Nativity as associate pastor. In September he founds the High School Mission which has monthly Mass, retreats, and social and service activities for young people.
September 28, 1997	The parish's 75th anniversary is commemorated with a 4 p.m. Mass followed by an ice cream social in the school auditorium. Memorabilia from the first 75 years were on display.
August 8, 1998	Monsignor Steiner dies after more than 50 years of service to Nativity of Our Lord.
November 9, 1998	Father Patrick Lannan dies while away on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Archbishop Harry Flynn names Father Bill Baer Parochial Administrator until a new pastor is chosen.
February 28, 1999	Father Bill Baer is appointed the new rector of St. John Vianney Seminary, replacing the current rector Fr. Peter Christensen.
May 9, 1999	Father Peter Christensen is announced the fifth Pastor of Nativity of Our Lord, beginning his duties in August.
September 12, 1999	The Lannan Parish Center is dedicated in honor of Fr. Patrick Lannan by Archbishop Flynn on the Saturday during the 25th anniversary of the County Fair.
January 9, 2000	Work begins on restoration of the stained-glass windows in the church and other needed repairs.
October 22, 2000	John and Catherine Michel sponsor the installation of the church monument on the corner of Prior and Stanford Avenues.
November 5, 2000	The Nativity Capital Campaign begins with home visits, with funds to be used to fix the stone around the windows, tuckpointing, and a new roof.
March 18, 2001	Fr. Richard Pates who was baptized, received First Holy Communion, and Confirmation at Nativity was named Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.
May 6, 2001	The Pastoral Council elects to begin a daily 5:00 p.m. Mass starting June 23 in the Upper Church.
September 2003	Sister Annabelle Theis, Nativity's Pastoral Minister to the Elderly and Infirm, celebrates her 50th Jubilee as a School Sister of Notre Dame.
October, 2003	Nativity Sunday Nursery School begins programs for children nine months to three years at the 9:30 and 11:00 Sunday liturgies.

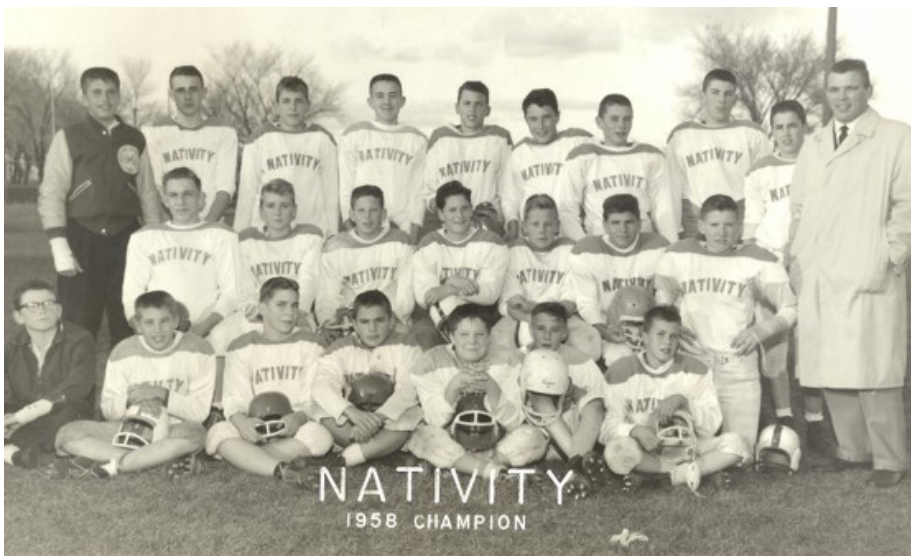
2005	The statues of the four Evangelists, made of wood and carved in Italy, filled the empty niches in the sanctuary. The statues were donated by Jim and Joanne Murphy, George Murphy, the Richmond Family, and the NCCW.
June 19, 2005	Father Jim Liekhus is appointed Associate Pastor.
January 8, 2006	The Our Legacy Capital Campaign for the school addition and renovation is launched.
2006	John and Catherine Michel donate the two outside statues of Isaiah and Ezekiel to fill the niches above the main entrance of the church. They both prophesied the birth of Our Lord, the patronal namesake of the parish.
April 1, 2007	The groundbreaking and site dedication for the school addition with Legacy Campaign gifts of \$11 million is celebrated.
June 29, 2007	Fr. Peter Christensen is appointed Bishop of the Superior, Wisconsin Diocese by Pope Benedict XVI.
November 11, 2007	Fr. Patrick Hipwell is named the sixth pastor of Nativity of Our Lord: "On Halloween morning I was summoned by Archbishop Flynn to meet him at his office," he writes. "He informed me that he was appointing me to be pastor of the Church of the Nativity of Our Lord in St. Paul. I have accepted the assignment with great appreciation."
September 7, 2008	The new school building is dedicated and blessed (pictured). The new school monument sign is donated by John and Catherine Michel and dedicated to Father Terence Moore.
October 11, 2008	The Nativity All School Reunion, celebrating classes 1923-2000 draws over 500 alumni.
February 15, 2009	Nativity Men's Club hosts its first annual Lenten Fish Fry event.
February 5, 2012	Deacon Russ Kocemba is appointed by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt to serve as a permanent deacon for Nativity of Our Lord.
February 17, 2013	The Forward with Faith Campaign continues to help paying school construction costs and repair of stained-glass windows.
February 9, 2014	Repair of stained-glass windows from water intrusion begins.
July 13, 2014	The Father Terence Moore Heritage Room is completed.
November 2015	John and Catherine Michel donates two statues for the Heritage Room of St. Paul, patron of the Archdiocese, and St. John Vianney, patron of priests.
May 7, 2016	Deacon Chad VanHoose, participating in the summer (transitional) deacon program at Nativity, leads a pilgrimage for youth and young adults to the Cathedral's holy door to receive a plenary indulgence for its Jubilee Year.
October 16, 2016	Sister Grace McKigney, C.S.J. celebrates her 70th Jubilee. She's the last sister to serve at Nativity of Our Lord School.



January 27, 2017	The first Cana Dinner is held to celebrate the sacrament of marriage (pictured).	
June 4, 2017	Fr. Patrick Hipwell celebrates his 40th anniversary of priesthood.	
October 27, 2017	Quarry tile is installed in the cross aisle in the middle of the church.	
January 14, 2018	Deacon Don Tienter is assigned to the parish by Archbishop Hebda.	
April 12, 2018	FORMED from the Augustine Institute is a digital platform made available to all parishioners through parishioner donations.	
September 16, 2018	The pews are removed from the church and sent to Iowa for repairs and restoration, while improvements are made to the floor and lights.	
January 25, 2019	Archbishop Hebda calls an Archdiocesan Synod, and Prayer and Listening sessions are offered at the parish.	
May 28, 2019	Deacon Jerry Devine celebrates 40 years since his ordination to the permanent diaconate.	
October 7, 2019	The new mission statement is promulgated by the Parish Council.	
June 2019 – May 2022	The One Nativity 2035 Initiative is announced under the leadership of Jerry Brennan, Dan Flanagan, and Erik Thurman, and guided by June Klaphake. A cross-section of the parish meets monthly to identify and recommend ways to better communicate, bolster, and sustain our parish mission well into the future. The conclusions focused on faith, leadership, and volunteerism in the parish, each to be enhanced through vibrant Pastoral and Finance Councils.	
March 19, 2020	The oncoming COVID-19 pandemic compels Archbishop Hebda to suspend in-person liturgies throughout the Archdiocese.	
August 24, 2020	School re-opens for in-person learning	
October 4, 2020	Archbishop Hebda approves Communion to again be distributed at regular time during Mass instead of on the way out the door.	
May 16, 2021	Steve Rosenberg retires after playing the organ for five decades.	
September 26, 2021	The Archdiocesan Synod resumes with discussion groups.	
April 22, 2022	County Fair hosts a successful dinner and live auction in the school gymnasium, now held separately from the three-day fall event.	
May 27-June 4, 2022	Archbishop Hebda asks all Catholics to pray for the upcoming Synod Assembly on Pentecost weekend, particularly by praying the Novena to the Holy Spirit	
June 12, 2022	Phases of work on the restoration of the church were identified, including stained glass, plaster repair, stone repair, and painting. Work will begin in January, 2023.	
June 26, 2022	Father Hipwell celebrates 45 years of priesthood.	
July 24, 2022	Father Jim Lies celebrates the 9:00 and 11:00 Masses to commemorate his 25th Anniversary, followed by a Donut Sunday.	
October 1, 2022	The parish's 100th Anniversary is commemorated with 5:00 p.m. Mass celebrated by Archbishop Hebda, followed by dinner and music under tents in the parking lot.	

A CENTURY OF SPORTS

N



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

From the beginning, Nativity School has been central to parish life. "Begin with a school" Archbishop Austin Dowling advised in his letter to the Reverend Terence Moore, giving him the charge of the newly formed parish. Moore followed his advice and built a school and rectory before the Church which wasn't completed until 15 years later. The school is both a symbol of the community's values and strong thread of continuity. Many families have sent two or more generations to the school. The school opened its doors in September 1923 only 1 year after Reverend Moore started the parish.

For half the century, the sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet ran the school. In the beginning they lived at the Provincial House on Randolph Avenue and walked to and from school. Finally, in 1952, a convent was built on Wellesley Avenue across the street from the school. But the sister's presence dwindled as vocations dropped dramatically during the next two decades leaving just Sister Grace McKigney who remained at the school as a member of the office staff and celebrated her 70th jubilee in 2017. Nativity had its first lay principal in 1976.

Thanks in large part to the sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who taught for modest compensation, parishioners sending their children to Nativity paid only nominal fees for many years. But by 1971, economics made tuition a necessity. The cost that year was \$38 for kindergarten and \$92 for grades 1-8. By 1997-98, tuition had risen to \$825 for kindergarten and \$1,560 for grades 1-8. Assistance was made available to parishioners unable to pay full tuition and that still exists today.

The current tuition for 2022-23 full-time kindergarten through grade 8 is \$5,790. Most of that cost is for teacher's salaries and benefits. In order to best meet the needs of today's learners Nativity has expanded its teaching staff to include academic specialists and mental health professionals.

Nativity finished its first year with 365 pupils and an eighth-grade class numbering 15. In just three years, enrollment nearly doubled as families moved into the parish. To accommodate them, the first school addition was built in 1927, and a second wing was added three years later in 1930. By 1932 there were 923 children attending Nativity.

Enrollment has mirrored societal trends. By the end of the fifties, post-World War II baby boomers were filling the classrooms to overflowing. By the end of the decade, some classrooms had as many as 52 students. To ease the crunch, a major addition was completed in 1960 which added 12 classrooms, administrative space and a gymnasium with a wood floor.



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

Enrollment peaked at 1,263 in the 1965-66 school year, then bottomed out at 548 in 1988-89, the decade that saw the closing and consolidation of many Catholic schools in the Twin Cities. Then, as baby boomers' children reached school age, enrollment began to climb again to 810 in 1997. Today at the centennial anniversary of Nativity Church, the school enrollment including the pre-school program is 729.

It wasn't until the year 2000 that the parish hired Wold Construction to conduct a facility analysis to identify critical structural needs of the school. Time and hard use had taken its toll on the 77-year-old structure, and it posed increasing difficulty to provide a high-quality education. In December 2005, Members of Nativity's Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Board and Early Learning Board unanimously voted to proceed with an extensive \$15 million renovation of the existing facility combined with construction of significant additional space. The parish community launched the largest capital campaign in Nativity's history called "Our Legacy" campaign. On August 15, 2008, the project was completed on time and on budget.

The resurgence of Catholic schools is credited partly due to demographics, but also to a renewed appreciation for value-centered education and parental involvement. Nativity of Our Lord School is a community of parents, teachers, staff, and parishioners committed to helping each student grow into the person God has called them to be through faith, academics, and character development.

Nativity of Our Lord School has been blessed with wonderful principals who have carried out this mission. Kate Wollan, our current principal, has been in that leadership position since 1993 guiding students and the school to its excellence.





Dedicated September 14, 1923

1923

Nativity of Our Lord School

2008

Rededicated September 7, 2008



SCHOOL MEMORIES

A former parishioner, Pat Tierney remembers his time at Nativity with great fondness. He was an altar server in the late 30's and was able (at age 92) to say all the Mass responses in Latin during our phone interview! He particularly remembers his 5th grade teacher: "Sister Mary Patrice would choose members of my class who were the least well behaved (which included myself) to buff the floors of the kindergarten room. Some of the smaller boys couldn't even push the machine and I wondered why this wasn't done by the janitor!"

"Father Moore was strict but wonderful. He handed out all the report cards, looked each one over and then make comments right in front of the whole class. He knew all about us. He knew everyone's voice and would call you by name when we went to confession." — Bob Stupka

"The whole school marched to lunch to the beat of John Phillip Sousa played on the victrola. I remember I always thought it would be so great to get to be the girl who played the victrola." — Carol Stupka

"I couldn't wait until I was in 8th grade so I could wind up the old Victrola phonograph and play John Phillip Sousa's March over the loudspeaker as the students were dismissed from school." — *Anonymous*

"My first day of kindergarten was my birthday. I turned six years old. Kindergarten for me was held in the same room as my dad was in 42 years earlier!"

— Joan Wolkerstorfer, written in 75th Anniversary Memory Book

"The school was always very family-oriented" shared Sister Marie Noelle, who taught at Nativity from the 1940's into the 1970's. "There has always been a closeness here; it was like a family."

Sister has many fond memories of her years at Nativity. "Once while I was leading a reading class I asked a question, and a little boy raised his hand and waved it so wildly I thought he must have a wonderful answer. When I called on him he asked me so earnestly, Sister do you have ears? I couldn't help but laugh out loud!" — Sr. Marie Noelle, 1997

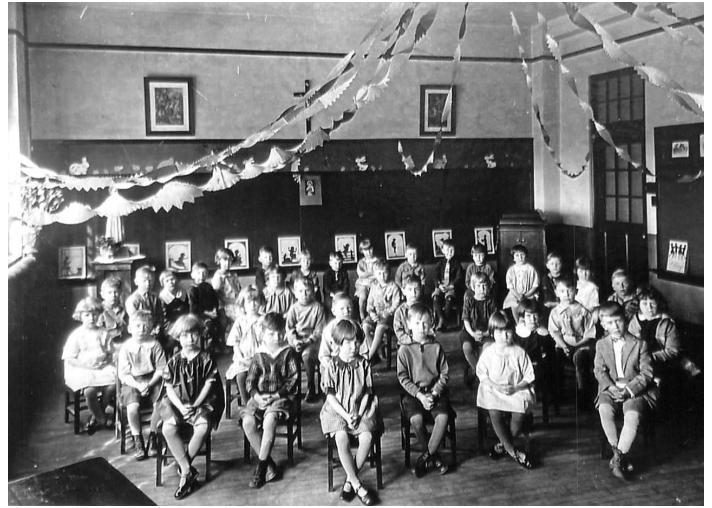
"I remember the inkwells on the corner of all the desks." — *Anonymous*

"I remember one winter day when all of us, boys, and girls alike, made a big pie in the snow and we made a running game of it. It was so much fun! And then we all ended in trouble for it and had to go in groups to Sister Carolyn's office. Boys and girls were not allowed to play together!" — *Anonymous*



KINDERGARTEN THEN

“It was the loveliest kindergarten room in the world. We even had our own cubby space to put our crayons and a blanket for nap time. Sister Aquina seemed awfully stern but likeable just the same.”



KINDERGARTEN NOW

“I was so excited for my first day of kindergarten. My teacher was very, very nice. During the year we had a Mother’s Day Para-Liturgy and Donuts with Dad. I liked computer class and learning about penguins and the ocean.”



8TH GRADE THEN

“The rural setting of Nativity in those early day was very apparent. Coming to church from the East one would inevitably pass by the Strobel cow barn, near the corner of Fairview and Stanford. The East end of the playground was an apple orchard and at recess in the Fall of the year many apple fights took place.”



8TH GRADE NOW

“8th grade at Nativity is a special year because as a class you have become a family. The family dynamic that we created made all the opportunities we were given incredibly fun and memorable. I know, that as a Nativity graduate, I have made life long friends.”

— Mary Jensen, Class of 2022

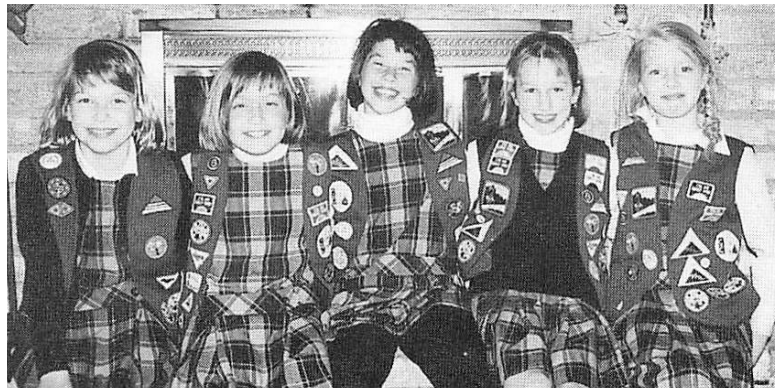


CAMP FIRE GIRLS

The first group of Camp Fire Girls began in 1948. Although most girls started in second grade, Bishop Byrne wanted the second graders to focus on their First Holy Communion and it wasn't until the 60's that second graders could participate.

The Camp Fire Girls proudly wore their colorful blue and red vests to school on meeting day, displaying all the badges they had proudly earned. Cathy Brennan, who was a Nativity Camp Fire leader in the early 90's, remembers the day the group was going to make Christmas wreaths.

"I had bought red and green peppers to attach to straw wreaths thinking it would be easy for the girls to tie them on. Little did I know that I had purchased red-hot peppers that stung if you got it on your skin or eyes. Soon I had the whole group crying and rubbing their eyes in pain! It was quite a sight when their mothers came to pick them up from an activity which was supposed to be fun!"



GIRL SCOUTS

Girl Scouts was active at Nativity starting in the 1990's. The program grew over time to include hundreds of girls from kindergarten through high school, including several high schoolers earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. Each troop was led by moms who volunteered their time to coordinate monthly meetings, Girl Scout cookie sales, camp overnights, religious awards, service projects including the annual parish and school MN Foodshare drive, the popular Daddy Daughter Dance planned by third grade troops.

A highlight for many girls was the annual week-long summer day camp with girls from Nativity, St. Mark's, Groveland, and the neighborhood riding a school bus to and from Camp Lakamaga each day for 10 years. Older girls were the camp counselors passing down Girl Scout traditions and songs to younger girls. The bus drivers enjoyed endless camp songs in exchange for a box of cookies as a thank you.





BOY SCOUTS

Nativity's Boy Scout Troop began in 1924 under the leadership of William Spangler. The focus initially was on camping but since has expanded to include a wide variety of outdoor and leadership activities. The aims of scouting are character development with a Catholic focus, leadership, citizenship, and personal fitness to prepare young men to make ethical moral choices based upon Scout oath and law. The initial scouting tradition at Nativity has grown into multi-generational participation often spanning two to three generations. The cub pack started in 1946 and is vibrant and active today.

Over the years there have been over 218 Eagle scouts, with Nativity parishioner William Cragg being the first to receive the Eagle in 1926. There have also been 4500 merit badges awarded including one Sea Quartermaster, one Venturing Silver Award, One Medal of Merit for Saving a Life, and numerous religious awards, the highest being the Pope Pius XII Award. Names of the awardees can be found on plaques in the hallway to the school cafeteria.



100TH ANNIVERSARY STEERING COMMITTEE

Chairs

Christina and Patrick Crow

Committee Members

Fr. Patrick Hipwell
Paul and Tricia Middleton
Paul Dzubnar
George Murphy
Cathy Brennan
Mary Michel
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All efforts were made to capture accurate and representative material from the 100 years of available information. Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions. Source information includes existing parish documents, including books put together for the Church Dedication in 1939, the 50th Parish Anniversary in 1972, the All-School Reunion, and the 75th Parish Anniversary. Other sources include the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul: Saga of an American City, by Virginia Kunz (1977 Windsor Publications); Minnesota's Irish, by Patricia Johnston (1984 Johnston Publishing, Inc.); and The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul by James Reardon (1952 North Central Publishing Co.), as well as Nativity of Our Lord bulletins from 1997 to 2022.

Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church

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NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
CATHOLIC CHURCH

100 YEARS • 1922-2022

MISSION STATEMENT

Promulgated October 7, 2019

Nativity of our Lord is a vibrant Catholic community committed to helping each person answer the call of Jesus Christ to serve as his disciple by...

Nurturing a rich sacramental and spiritual life;

Supporting strong Catholic education and faith formation;

Fostering fellowship and community;

And providing abundant opportunities to participate in the parish's long tradition of Christian witness.