



**St. Victoria
Parish Family
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Right Place at the Right Time

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Did You Know . . .

In the 20 years that Fr. Bob has been at St. Victoria he has:

- Celebrated 512 Baptisms
- Celebrated 135 weddings
- Celebrated 999 First Communions
- Celebrated 803 Confirmations
- Celebrated the lives of 210 parishioners, relatives and friends at their funerals
- (And that's not counting Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals at other churches for family and friends.)

He's also filled 20 binders with every homily he has delivered.

"It was 20 years ago in July 1996 that I walked into the sacristy of the Historic Church just a few minutes before the start of the 8 a.m. Mass. Half the parishioners there were old timers with heavy German accents, like 92-year-old Dorothy Diethelm Schmieg. They were praying the Rosary, Dorothy was leading the charge, 'Da Third Sorrowful Mystery . . . Da Crowning of Thorns. . . Holy Mary, Mudder of God.'

"That next Sunday I

introduced myself, the first Diocesan Priest ever to serve at St. Victoria. When I told those gathered, they looked at me like I was from another planet. But that didn't matter. They welcomed me in. And, in the days going forward many of those original parishioners, people like Liz Diethelm, Jerry Schmieg, Nan and Jim Emmer, stopped by the parish house – the old blue house that stood in the middle of our parking lot – to see what I might need and to make sure I was comfortable."

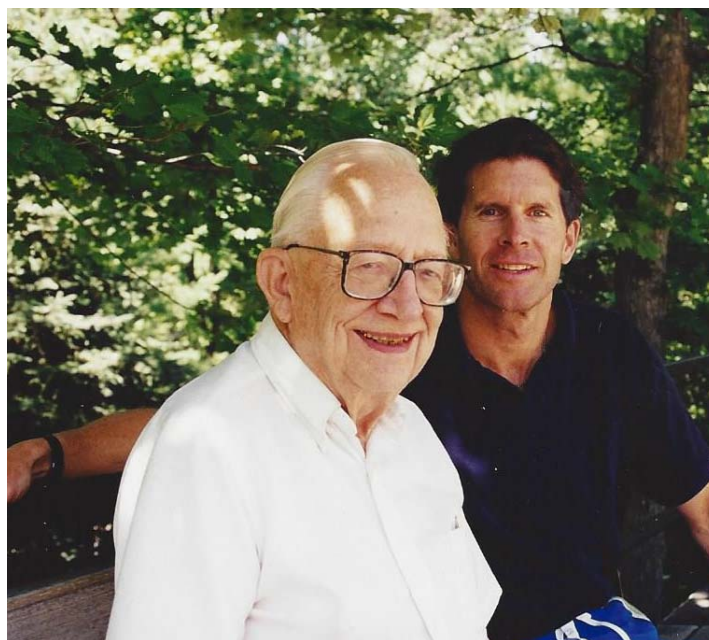
Father Bob said he knew he was following a legend, the affable and witty Fr. Elstan Coghill. He was the last of the Franciscans who had been here since the beginning of the parish, a good 140 years earlier, leading what was then a "Mission Church" under the auspices of the Franciscans.

It hardly seems possible that 20 years has passed since I handed over the keys for the parish house to Fr. Bob. Under his caring leadership, I have witnessed the growth of our parish from less than 400 families to more than 1,300, the construction of our new church and expansion of our ministry opportunities from a handful to more than 60. Our parish has been blessed to have Fr. Bob as our Shepherd as he truly epitomizes our mission statement of reaching out as the face and hands of Jesus Christ.

Margaret Hanson

"Coming to St. Victoria was one of the easiest decisions I ever made. I was up for a new assignment. When I came here to meet Elstan

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Fr. Elstan and Fr. Bob

Jubilee Year of Mercy



In this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has called for a “revolution of tenderness,” asking Catholics to “cultivate the tenderness of God toward each one of us” and to “commit to making our own the mercy of the Good Samaritan.” Catholic tradition has identified a few particular ways of cultivating that tenderness and mercy of God: the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. This year the Church is urging all Catholics to rediscover and practice these works in a very intentional way.

At St. Victoria, many practice the Corporal Works of Mercy in very apparent ways through our ministries.

We clothe the naked when members of Catholic United Financial and the many volunteers hold successful rummage sales (and this year’s was the most successful yet). The sale is an opportunity for many of us to purge our closets of unneeded clothing while providing clothes for many people who may need to shop for themselves and their families on a limited budget. Throughout the year, we also find other ways to help those in need from collecting coats in the fall to our baby shower on Mother’s Day and donating clothing to Simpson House for homeless men and women. And, many find other organizations to

help. Whatever we can do to help those who are struggling is a way of showing mercy for our brothers and sisters.

We feed the hungry each month when volunteers travel to Minneapolis to serve a meal at Sharing and Caring Hands and, at the same time, have an opportunity to share a smile or a kind word with individuals and families in need. Often, when there is food remaining after parish events someone makes an emergency run to Sharing and Caring Hands. And, about every six weeks another group of volunteers prepares and serves dinner to homeless men and women at Simpson House, also in Minneapolis. Probably the most visible example of feeding the hungry occurs every Sunday when our littlest members bring food to the altar. After Mass, our servers bag up the food and place it in the food shelf bin (right inside the main entrance) where volunteer drivers pick up and deliver the donations to the Bountiful Basket Food Shelf in Chaska. By the way, you are always welcome to leave food in the food shelf bin. We also participate each year in Minnesota FoodShare, bringing food and making cash donations and we donate food items like peanut butter and jelly or rice and beans at other times during the year. And, Feed My Starving Children is often a Faith Formation service choice.

We give drink to the thirsty when we pay a water bill through our St. Vincent de Paul Fund that is earmarked to help people in need. Or, when we make contributions to the Catholic Relief Agency to help people who have been impacted by natural disasters and are without clean drinking water.

To visit the imprisoned is another of the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy. Each month, a group of volunteers join Deacon Ray at the Carver County Jail, offering not only spiritual solace but friendship.

Another of the Works of Mercy calls

us to **bury the dead**. Often the Sacristans, Lectors, Servers and Eucharistic Ministers participating in the funeral service are St. Victoria volunteers. And, there probably is no more dedicated group of St. Victoria volunteers than those who provide comfort and friendship along with a meal following funerals at St. Victoria. There are “callers” contacting our wonderful cooks for salads and desserts; volunteers preparing and serving lunch and there are those who stay to clean-up. They truly bring comfort to those who mourn.

It is also the calling of our Bereavement Ministry to bring a caring presence to members of our parish who are grieving the loss of a significant person in their lives. The goal is that no one shall grieve alone. The members of this ministry offer caring, quiet listening and support, helping those grieving to know they are not alone. Each year, the ministry hosts a Mass of Remembrance, providing a time for those grieving to come together.

We are called to visit the sick. Teams of parishioners bring Communion to individuals who are in nursing homes or at home due to illness, surgery or other health issues. Not only do they bring spiritual nourishment, but they bring their friendship and concern. Each month, Fr. Bob or Deacon Ray, along with a dedicated group of volunteers, celebrates Mass or a Communion Service for residents of Good Samaritan in Waconia. Another group of parishioners travels to Good Sam twice each month where they gather the Catholics together to pray the Rosary. All the visits include time for socializing, often a special moment for those living at Good Sam who are members of St. Victoria.

Whenever prayers are needed for particular intentions – often within hours – members of the Prayer Line are offering prayers with each person praying in his or her own way. Additional members, Prayer

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Year of Mercy

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Warriors, who are available to call or send emails quickly keeping the Prayer Line ongoing.

We are also called to **shelter the homeless**. Our newest mission, Launch Ministry (see article on page 11), helps the Launch Ministry in Chaska provide for young men and women who often are homeless. Help ranges from providing meals to mentoring and volunteering in the Drop-In Center. Help is provided through our St. Vincent de Paul

Fund to people needing a helping hand, to pay their rent or utilities to buying food or fuel. Participation in Love INC initiatives also helps those who are homeless or finding it difficult to make ends meet. Our Clean Sweep initiative, with 12 volunteers coordinated by John Helgerson, provides cleaning supplies. They shop for supplies, deliver them to the church, stock shelves, assemble bags and deliver supplies to clients. In 2015, Clean Sweep impacted 367 households in Eastern Carver County. As one

client said, “My family and I are really thankful for your help. I wish we didn’t need to ask for help, but it’s getting us through a tough time right now.”

Similar words could be spoken by the many who are helped through our many and varied ministries. Our volunteers are living examples of what practicing Corporal Works of Mercy means. To every person giving in his or her own way, you are a blessing in the lives of others. You are serving — and loving — as God loves us.

Opportunities to Actively Participate at Mass

Volunteers make the difference at every Mass! There are numerous ways to volunteer and actively participate at Mass. First, individuals are invited to be **Sacristans** preparing the altar, lighting candles and other tasks before Mass.

Lectors read parts of the Mass as well as Prayers of the Faithful following the homily. **Servers**, as their title denotes, serve the priest throughout Mass in numerous ways from bringing the wine and water to him to holding the sacred book.

Eucharistic Ministers offer consecrated bread and wine to the congregation during Communion. The **Usher/Greeters** are the first welcoming faces people see as they enter the church. Their tasks include handing out hymnals, directing people to seats if necessary and taking up the collection.

Once each month, **Team Isaiah** members greet people as they enter the church giving each one a name tag so we can greet each other by name at the beginning of Mass.

All of these ministry positions are important in celebrating Mass. All volunteers receive training and are scheduled on a revolving basis.

Another way to actively celebrate at Mass is to join in the singing. While we are all invited, and encouraged, to join each other in song, there are a number of musical groups you also are invited to consider.

Little Ringers are children in grades pre-K through 4th. They play at Mass monthly, meeting one hour prior to Mass to rehearse. They also will play at the annual Christmas Concert. Children only need to know their colors to participate.

Praise HYMs members are students in grades nine through adults who are instrumentalists and singers. The group sings a variety of music and members are given opportunities for solos, to accompany on the piano and to play instruments. The group plays and sings at Mass monthly. They meet one hour prior to Mass to rehearse and they rehearse one or two Thursdays each month from 8 to 9:15 p.m. The group is also actively recruiting guitarists, wind players, keyboardists and percussionists to join the group.

Agape Singers includes singers in grade nine through adults. They sing at Mass weekly (except the third weekend of each month). They meet 45 minutes

prior to Mass to warm up and rehearse. and they rehearse weekly on Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

King Ringers includes students in grade 9 through adults. The group plays at Mass every one to two months and rehearses weekly on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., beginning October 4. Some training or experience is required.

All the groups will be performing during the Christmas season and/or at the annual Christmas Concert.

Grace School and Middle School singers and instrumentalists who are interested in performing should contact Elizabeth Nowak, Director of Music and Literature about potential opportunities.

In addition, students in grade nine through adults are invited to be cantors, accompanists and instrumentalists at Masses. Scheduling is flexible and training will be provided.

One ministry not yet mentioned is that of the **Sound Board Technicians**. They are important in making certain that we hear all the words and the music of the Mass.

To volunteer, or for information, contact Elizabeth Nowak, Director of Music and Liturgy.

It's Been Twenty Years, But Who's Counting?

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and Maude (his faithful dachshund), he didn't have to say anything. I just knew, this is it."

In looking back, Father said his decision to be a priest started at a very early age, although it remained in the back of his mind for most of his "growing up" years. "I came from a 'very Catholic' family, especially my Irish Dad. When I was about four years old, he read me a book about a World War II Navy Chaplain, Fighting Fr. Duffy, who 'went down with the ship.' That story grabbed my little four-year-old heart. Soon after, I told a dining car waiter while traveling to California with my mom that I planned to be a priest when I grew up.

"It was always in the back of my mind, but while my parents were always in my corner, there was no pressure. It was probably hard for my dad to contain his excitement. I thought about it often, but also worried that maybe I 'might not be good enough.' In 1965 I entered the seminary and in 1974 I was ordained." The new assignment at St. Victoria came after several parish assignments and a five-year stint in Venezuela.

In the summer of 1961, I met Bob White. God blessed me when we were on the same summer baseball team. That September we both entered St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul where our friendship grew. When Nan and I married in 1969, Bob was there. It seems like he's always been there — a great friend! Three years after his ordination he sponsored us on a Cursilio weekend. That experience completely changed my faith and our marriage. When we moved to Victoria in 1993, we fell in love with the little parish and Fr. Elstan. What a wonderful surprise when Fr. Bob succeeded him in 1996. Together we have celebrated our families and friends. I have been blessed to be with Fr. Bob when he anoints the sick and dying. Thank you Lord for a great friend and Pastor!

Jim Emmer

"In the early days here, the parish office was about as bare bones as it could be. There were no computers, no copiers except for an old one in the basement of the parish center and a rotary phone in the back room.

"About Christmas that year, I made my first hire, a young man who called and asked for an audition. I was talking to Jamie Moore. He was hired on the spot. Later, I hired Carol Spalding as our part-time secretary.

One day, when Carol, Jamie and I were sitting in the office then attached to the Historic Church, my bother Bill walked in. He said it was just like I had said. "Take a left at Leo's bar (today it is Floyd's) and go about a half mile. That's right, there was no stoplight at Highways 5 and 11 in those days. About the same time, Frannie and Ray Schmieg went by on their riding lawn mower and Kenny Diethelm came in the screen door to hang a picture wearing, of course, his 'tape measure' suspenders. Bill quipped, "The longer I'm here, the more I feel like I am at St. Andy of Mayberry."

However, that little parish with the "small town feel" was growing. The little church was becoming too small. "We knew we could stay the same small church and risk losing a resident pastor," Father said, "or we could take a huge step forward and build a new church." The decision ultimately was to build a new church, but with one stipulation, the Historic Church would stay. The parish stepped up, ground was broken in 2003 and on Mother's Day, May 9, 2005, Archbishop Harry Flynn dedicated our beautiful new church.

About the same time as plans for the new church were underway, another situation developed that no one quite literally ever saw coming.

"Early in 2000, due to a hereditary condition, quite suddenly I began to experience center vision loss," Father said. "One week I could see the ushers in the back and the next



Fr. Bob and Archbishop Harry Flynn at the dedication of the new church.

week I could only see half way down the church. I remember the day I gave up the keys to my car. The Archdiocese asked if I wanted a parish in the cities where getting around might be more convenient. I told them that wouldn't be necessary. I had a parish that was going to make it work for me and that's exactly what happened. I have drivers, people to read for me, wonderful St. Victoria cooks, and a growing staff that has taken on many responsibilities that allow me to serve as a parish priest."

Dear Bullet: Sharing many Mondays with you showed me a gentleman and a scholar. Riding along as your partner in "crime" it was obvious how unselfish, caring and busy you are in your priestly calling. Thank you for the 20 years with the St. Victoria Parish Family. We parishioners are so lucky to have shared some or all of those years with you. Sorry we are missing "our calling" as Bullet and Bugsey. Hope to catch up soon. Love Ya, Bugsey (Terry Daly)

The Life of Fr. Bob is a Blessing We All Share

“I’ve often said that in many ways my vision loss has been a blessing because I have had wonderful opportunities to know so many of you. Chub Williams once told me that the outpouring from the people made us a better parish.

“It also opened a whole different world for me. I humbly learned to ask for help and found it was a blessing not being afraid to receive that help. It is a privilege being part of a parish community that has a wonderful way of welcoming people and bringing out the best in them, even the priest.

We are so honored to have witnessed this wonderful journey of yours from the onset at Our Lady of the Lake to this celebration of your 20-year Anniversary at St. Victoria. It has been a fabulous ride sharing in the wake of your immense strength, positive energy and unwavering determination. Blessings to you,

Mary and Mike Doshan

“I think being a priest is really a ‘back stage pass’ to peoples’ lives. You are called to be with them in significant moments in their lives. I’ve seen everything from tragedy to burgers on the back grill. It’s very humbling and, yes, there have been times when situations felt overwhelming, but I know I can always call on the Grace of God. Looking back, I would feel badly if I harmed anyone, but I believe in working and learning from the good and the bad, trusting it all works out the way it was meant to be and that it has made me the person I am today.

Today, I see myself as a priest/preacher, a practioner, a pathfinder setting a vision and direction for our parish in collaboration with the staff, the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils and a poet journaling, praying, walking, composing homilies. The fifth dimension, I like to say, is staying in touch with my physical self — exercising, water skiing, my winter ski team and, of



Huddle Time

The first time I had the opportunity to get to know Fr. Bob was in 2003 when we became Confirmation leaders together. Our sessions were held in a house where the parking lot exists today. This house, I might add, was actually torn down during our Confirmation sessions and we had to work together to serve our students in a constantly changing class environment. Nevertheless, it was the beginning of a true friendship as well as a mutual commitment to young adults that continues to flourish today. I soon learned that this commitment was not the only characteristic we shared.

Fr. Bob, I found out, is just as competitive as I am. Eager to put our sportsmanship to the test, we started the rewarding tradition of Fr. Bob vs. Joe Hamilton at the annual Sunset Fest’s Heroes Swim. He won’t admit it, but I do believe I’m ahead by one win (just to make it official). Qualities such as a dedication to the youth in our parish and that fun, competitive nature are what make Fr. Bob so relatable. Since our first encounter, he has brought me closer to Christ with that down-to-earth, no pressure approach. Fifteen years ago, my daughter was diagnosed with a rare form of Leukemia (Philadelphia Chromosome). My wife Kathy and I will always be grateful for the parish support that Fr. Bob orchestrated during our daughter’s successful battle with cancer. I’m sure many parishioners would agree that, as my family learned, Fr. Bob is there to offer his support at the drop of a hat when times are tough.



The winner!

Your friend, Joe Hamilton

course, biking. I enjoy my personal biathlons, when I bike like a mad man and then stop for a swim at Lake Bavaria. I also look to my family and inner circle of friends and comrades to keep me grounded. Today, my energy continues to serve me well and I think it serves the parish. I don’t know what the future holds, but I look forward to it and I know I might not always be a pastor, but I will always be a priest. And, I know whoever might succeed me will receive the same welcome I did.

Some would think that me joining the parish the same year you were assigned to St. Victoria is a coincidence. I think not . . . You hired me to be the parish secretary . . . The “perfectionist” and the “fly by the seat of your pants guy” now in the same office. Yikes. Truly it has to be God’s work! Thankfully, (sometimes comically), we have learned to fly over the hurdles. In the 18 years I have worked with you, I have never watched you walk away from any situation. I often find you praying, knowing in my heart you are asking God for His guidance. You have touched so many lives with your compassion, love and respect. Even during trying times I see patience, guidance and gentle encouragement. Thank you for being a mentor and friend to me, my family and so many others. May God continue to guide us as we work together to be the face and hands of Jesus Christ. I wish you nothing but the best as you continue your walk with God.

Joni Jeurissen



Enjoying a Sunset Fest, Cowboy Bob and Betsy.

Our St. Victoria Faith Formation Team

Emily Klinker, Director of Adult, Children and Youth Formation, announced that with the addition of Ann Esping and Tanya Hisey as Assistant Director for Youth Formation, the Faith Formation Team is now at full strength. Emily said the team brings new energy and opportunities for the entire parish.

Ann and Tanya join Emily and Sara Svenby, Assistant Director for Children's Formation. Ann and Tanya job share (each part-time) as Assistant Director for Youth Formation with an emphasis on grades six through 12. They join Sara who is Assistant Director for Children's Formation with an emphasis on Pre-school through Grade Five and Emily who will have the added responsibility of Adult Formation.

All the positions include curriculum planning, volunteer coordination, sacramental preparation and other activities including Vacation Bible School, summer camps and other ministry activities involving our children and youth. Since Ann and Tanya are job sharing they will not necessarily be in the office at the same time, but both will be available at Faith Formation and activities involving youth.

Ann has been a parishioner for 12 years and in that time has volunteered in a number of ministries. Most recently, she has been assisting Emily with curriculum development for Middle School and High School. Tanya, a member of a long-time St. Victoria family (the Lehnrs), returned to Minnesota two years ago and since has volunteered as a substitute catechist for all grades and most recently in our middle school program. She also has helped with Vacation Bible School and led a Confirmation small group.

Looking Back

In looking back over the last Faith Formation season, Emily shared it was a busy and effective year. "Sara continued to offer her students

opportunities to grow in their faith and to provide support to the catechists. She introduced a new 5th Grade curriculum based with a more youth group feel that leads into the curriculum for the Middle School students, Edge Encounter."

In a survey of Confirmation Students following last season's classes, the kids shared that they appreciated their leaders and stated that their faith had been impacted. They said they especially appreciated their positive leaders and their small group meetings. "We also have had a positive response from the students, catechists and parishioners for our second annual Faith Fest. The students and the catechists enjoyed sharing what they had done all year, what they had learned and they were pleased to hear positive comments from parishioners."

Looking Ahead

Emily said her team intends to focus on "First Church," meaning they want to integrate the Faith Formation families as well as the broader parish community into their programming. "When we talk about First Church, we are emphasizing that Faith Formation is more than an hour a week in the classroom. Our first introduction to our faith starts at home with a child's first catechist, their parents and others important in their lives, long before the first Faith Formation Class. We want to find meaningful ways to involve parents in innovative opportunities, as well as the broader parish with ministries like praying for our kids."

Plans also include growing Junior High Youth Ministry opportunities with fun activities to augment their classroom experiences. This summer, we had a couple successful activities for this age group – a day at a water park and an afternoon of games and fun. We also introduced a Bible Study for our Senior High students. We hope to grow these programs for two reasons, to provide some fun and action and to encourage their ongoing, and hopefully, life-long participation in church life."

Emily also shared that the team is excited to announce a Mission Trip planned for next summer. "Our Youth Ministry will be partnering with YouthWorks for a mission trip to a Native American Indian Reservation. Trips like this are an amazing opportunity to enrich the lives of our students and the lives of tribal members through kids programming and simple work projects."

Emily said she will be more involved in adult Faith Formation, continuing participation in RCIA (Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults) and planning and coordinating opportunities for adults, including Bible Studies both during Faith Formation sessions and at other times.

"I am looking forward to a busy and faith-filled year ahead working with a vibrant, energized team and with the dedicated volunteers who are vital to the success of all our programs."



(Left to right) Ann Esping, Sara Svenby, Emily Klinker, Tanya Hisey

It's Time to Move On to Something New

It is with a heavy heart that I accepted Patty Schlader's resignation. She brought her skills and talents to St. Victoria, making certain we have ministries to meet the many needs of our parish and the community. She also has spearheaded the many exceptional events we have come to look forward to each year, including Sunset Fest, La Noche Azul and outstanding retreats.

Patty, you will be missed, but we wish you well on your future journey. On behalf of your co-workers and the parish family, we send you with our prayers and blessings each day on this new journey.

Fr. Bob

Here we share Patty's message to Fr. Bob, the parish staff and the parish.

"Eyes to see and ears to hear. Let's notice what is happening in our lives. Let's not wait for a major tragedy to wake us up. Let's not allow life to pass us by while we ignore the signals of divine revelation that come through ordinary and extra-ordinary moments. Let's tune in and be amazed." **Joyce Rupp**

You know how you just hear that sweet small voice inside of you that says it's time, it's time to move on to something else. (Not really knowing what that something is.)

I have heard that voice and have made a decision to move on from my position here as Director of Shared Ministries and Events. This has been an incredible 12 years of building up our ministries through your loving hands. St. Victoria is being the face and hands of Jesus. It has been an honor and joy to work with all of our coordinators over the years and the many, many volunteers who "show up" for our ministries and events. Thank you so much for all the support you have extended to Fr. Bob and the entire staff. As of September 1, I am open to new possibilities.

Blessings — **Patty Schlader**



St. Victoria volunteers preparing to serve dinner to homeless men and women at Simpson House in South Minneapolis. This is just one of the Parish Community Outreach Ministries (P-Coms) that Patty Schlader initiated and grew while at St. Victoria.



Matt Shireman Ordained a Deacon

Matt Shireman, our seminarian who has been assigned to St. Victoria as his teaching parish, was ordained a Deacon in May.

Matt is now a fourth-year student at the St. Paul Seminary and St. Victoria has been his teaching parish. Father Bob said, "It has been my privilege as a pastor to have a role in the formation of this fine, young man." Seminarians are assigned to churches where they learn from the perspective of a parish priest or, you might say, they get some "on the job training"

for their priesthood and the responsibilities ahead.

Matt joined the seminary in the fall of 2011 and he will be ordained a priest next May. Matt is no stranger to the area. Growing up, he was a member of St. Therese in Deephaven, where his family still attends.

This summer, he was assigned to St. Stephens in Anoka, another parish in the Archdiocese. This fall, St. Victoria will again be his teaching parish. When he comes back in the fall, he will assist at

Masses including delivering homilies and he will be able to celebrate (or concelebrate) Baptisms and weddings.



Matt Shireman

Mystery of Faith the Crossing@Church Lake

As many of you know, St. Victoria had announced a joint effort with the Carver County Community Development Agency (CDA) and the City of Victoria to develop 2.5 acres of church land to build affordable senior housing, known as the crossing@church lake, for elderly residents of limited means in our community.

St. Victoria embraced this outreach to seniors as an extension of our calling to offer radical hospitality and as an embodiment of our mission to reach out to all as the face and hands of Jesus.

Unfortunately, the steep slopes and contours of the land that the parish had to offer, upon which the facility would have been built, proved to be too challenging and expensive for the engineers to accommodate. The CDA informed us that despite all of their creative efforts, the projected cost of necessary site work for grading, retaining walls and utility constraints came in more than \$1 million over budget. And as such, the proposed facility would not achieve mutual affordability expectations.

Significantly, a draft traffic study

for the site that had been ordered to gauge the impact of the new development on the adjacent neighborhood proved to be a moot issue due to the site engineering constraints.

Fr. Bob said that despite the disappointment that this endeavor will not now move forward, he was gratified that the parish family was party to this bold effort to serve the elderly of our community. “No doubt, God will bring to light good things from our willingness to serve that are now hidden to us. Until then, as Saint Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:9, we will “hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.”

In their announcement, the City of Victoria said that while this project is not going forward, and St. Victoria has no immediate plans for other development of the property, the church has indicated it intends to continue to explore opportunities to be of service to the larger community in being faithful to its mission.

“As we go forward,” Fr. Bob said, “we do not know what the future holds for our parish, but I believe we need to continue to explore ways to fulfill our mission and vision.”

(Editor’s note: The words Fr. Bob shared at the parish and community meetings illustrate his vision for St. Victoria as a part of the local and global community as well as a parish.)

“The mission and vision of a parish that truly is serious about being faithful to the Gospel is predicated on the underlying premise that a parish doesn’t exist for itself. It exists to serve others. We serve our own and we serve those beyond us, the local community and the global community. The way we say that at St. Victoria is that we are a parish family that strives to be the face and hands of Jesus among ourselves and to those beyond us.

“We exist to serve. That premise has some practical implications. First, the parish’s mission and vision are not here to serve the parish’s resources. Rather, parish resources are here to serve and advance the parish’s mission and vision. This distinction is important to keep in mind when allocating parish resources.

“A second implication of our call to serve is that we don’t isolate ourselves from the local community. As a parish, we are also called to be good stewards of all that God has blessed us with.”



Pizza and lemonade for all was the menu for our annual Volunteer Appreciation event. The giant pizzas prepared onsite by Roger and Michelle Hammers' crew were a delicious hit. Fr. Bob and the parish staff were on hand to serve their guests and to pass along a thank you to every one who has ever volunteered as well as to the many parishioners and their families who attend Mass at St. Victoria.

St. Victoria Financial Health Check-up

Our 2016-2017 Stewardship Campaign has officially ended and we are pleased to announce the final numbers. We received 357 stewardship pledges totaling \$717,446.80 and 125 debt reduction pledges totaling \$108,472. With the addition of 102 continuing Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) stewardship offerings of \$115,640, the stewardship total is \$833,087. Likewise, the addition of 16 EFT offerings for debt reduction brings that total to \$116,512.

In the last year, we have also added significantly to the number of parishioners using EFT for contributions. We are now at 20 percent parish-wide. Everyone is encouraged to enroll in automatic electronic giving. It's an easy way to commit to regular giving. It is convenient for you and it also allows St. Victoria to budget more effectively. You will find EFT enrollment forms in the kiosk, you can enroll online on our parish website or call the parish office.

We are also pleased to announce that we completed our fiscal year, July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, in the black. We were able to meet all our financial obligations, accelerate repayment of our mortgage debt and also reserve additional funds for projected long-term repair expenses. We will provide a more complete financial report later this fall.

In addition to normal, everyday expenses, we were able to accomplish some needed changes and repairs. A construction crew completed the ceiling repair work in the Worship Space. There was work done in the cemetery that included removing the decade-long collection of dirt that had accumulated at the back of the

cemetery. Three truck loads of dirt were hauled out and the area is was regraded and seeded. In addition, the drive/path into the cemetery has been regraded and additional gravel put down.

You might also have noticed a bench that has been placed in the shade near the Historic Church. This resting spot is in memory of Bob and Mary Jane Ploof and was placed there by their family.

It has been some time since the completion of the repair and restoration of the stained glass windows in the Historic Church. I hope you have taken a few minutes to look at the beautiful work that was done to ensure the windows will continue to be a part of the beautiful Historic Church environment.

All of the work that has been accomplished is due to generous gifts and grants to St. Victoria.

If the World were 100 people . . .

- 50 would be female and 50 would be male.
- 26 would be 0 to 14 years of age, 66 would be 15 to 64, and 8 would be 65 or older.
- 60 would be from Asia, 15 from Africa, 11 from Europe, 9 from Latin America and the Caribbean and 5 would be from North America.
- 33 would be Christian, 22 would be Muslim, 14 would be Hindu, 7 would be Buddhist, 12 would believe in other religions, 12 would not be religious or identify themselves as being aligned with a particular faith.
- 12 would speak Chinese, 5 Spanish, 5 English, 3 Arabic, 3 Hindi, 3 Bengali, 3 Portuguese, 2 Russian, 2 Japanese and 62 other languages.
- 83 would be able to read and write; 17 would not.
- 88 males and 79 females would be able to read and write.
- 76 percent of males and 72 percent of females would have a primary school education. 66 percent of males and 63 percent of females would have a secondary school education. 7 percent of males and females would have a college degree.
- 51 would be urban dwellers and 49 would be rural dwellers.
- 48 would live on less than \$2 per day. 1 out of 2 children would live in poverty.
- 87 would have access to safe drinking water and 13 would use unimproved water. 65 would have improved sanitation; 16 would have no toilets and 19 would have unimproved toilets.
- 15 would be undernourished; 1 percent would have HIV/AIDS and 1 percent would have tuberculosis.
- 78 would have electricity; 22 would not.
- 75 would be cell phone users; 30 would be active internet users and 22 would own or share a computer.



Helping to "Launch" Young Adults



Six years ago, Corey Magstadt, who was a minister at a neighboring church, met a young man who was struggling as he transitioned to adulthood in today's society. "I knew I wanted to do more for him and for other young people and, in many cases, their families."

Corey founded Launch Ministry, a faith-based, non-profit organization established to expose young adults between 18 and 29 years old to opportunities that promote healthy and productive transitions into adulthood. Launch Ministry assists these young adults by providing them tools to develop life skills, opportunities to lead and serve and by promoting spiritual and character formation. Launch Ministry can help these young people with support and connections to develop life skills, housing, employment opportunities and more through one-on-one mentoring relationships, Bible studies and support groups and weekly free-community building dinners. Launch works closely with other shelters, youth non-profit and civil community offices to guide young adults toward the services that can support their needs. Launch Ministry is located in the lower level of the Chaska Moravian Church and primarily serves Carver County.

Launch supports the idea that through discipleship and family support, young adults can be successful in their efforts to contribute to our communities. "Many times a simple conversation or information about an unknown available service can help a young adult get on his or her feet as a stepping stone to a productive future," Corey said.

The ministry that has grown from that vision attracted the attention of parishioner Lynn Gerebi and, in

turn, she brought it to Fr. Bob and Patty Schlader, Director of Shared Ministries. Thanks to Lynn, Launch Ministry has been "launched" at St. Victoria. At a meeting in early summer, Corey introduced Launch to a group of parishioners to share how they could be involved. Following that meeting, Corey said he could not have been more pleased with the response of our parish family.

Lynn, who now coordinates efforts at St. Victoria to support Launch, said there are volunteer opportunities from cooking to sharing life experiences. Included are:

Meals for 20 Hungry Youth

Seven or eight times a year, volunteers will provide one component of the meal: main dish, vegetable, bread, beverage or dessert. Food is delivered to St. Victoria on the day of the meal and then two volunteers deliver the meal to the drop-in center at the Moravian Church. If they want, the volunteers can then stay for dinner with the young people.

Drop-in Center

The Launch Ministry Drop-In Center is open Monday through Friday, 2 to 5 p.m. During that time, volunteers are needed to act as greeters and to help screen young adults and help them gain available resources. They also may help with office tasks. Training is provided.

Guest Speaker

The first Tuesday of every month, Launch Ministry asks a community expert to speak to their clients about topics that may benefit or interest them. Talks can include topics such as jobs, fitness, money management, faith, relationships, mental health, post-secondary education and other pertinent topics. If you have an area of expertise that you would like to share, please contact Launch Ministry. Again, training is provided.

Needs Drive

Often when individuals come into the center they have very few

possessions, with many of their basic needs not being met. Participants at this year's Vacation Bible School had a "Needs Drive," donating personal hygiene items, Easy Mac meals (or similar), bottled water and packaged snack bars.

Fresh Start

Launch Ministry assists young people in finding housing in surrounding communities. The housing is a managed program for young people in need who qualify for a state-funded program or who have found a source of income. Most often this occurs for residents in Carver County. Corey and his staff administer this program. At St. Victoria, Jim and Wendy Alessio are coordinating Fresh Start, St. Victoria's opportunity to help these young people by providing "New Housing Containers," or providing a "Fresh Start." The first collection was very successful with parishioners donating more than 300 items and additional cash, enough for three Fresh Start Containers. Donations included household items, cleaning supplies, bedding and towels, fans, TVs, and microwaves along with cash. Each Fresh Start Container also included a note telling them that the donations were provided by St. Victoria parishioners with love and care. Similar drives will be held in the future.

Corey also shared information about the program developed for parents struggling to help their adult children find their way. Launch Ministry partnered with St. Francis Hospital to develop a curriculum and had a pilot program at Westwood Church. If you would like more information about this program — or about all the Launch Ministry initiatives, contact Corey at corey@launchministry.org.

To learn more about St. Victoria's involvement, including how to sign up for an upcoming dinner or to receive regular updates, contact Lynn Gerebi at lgerebi@gmail.com.

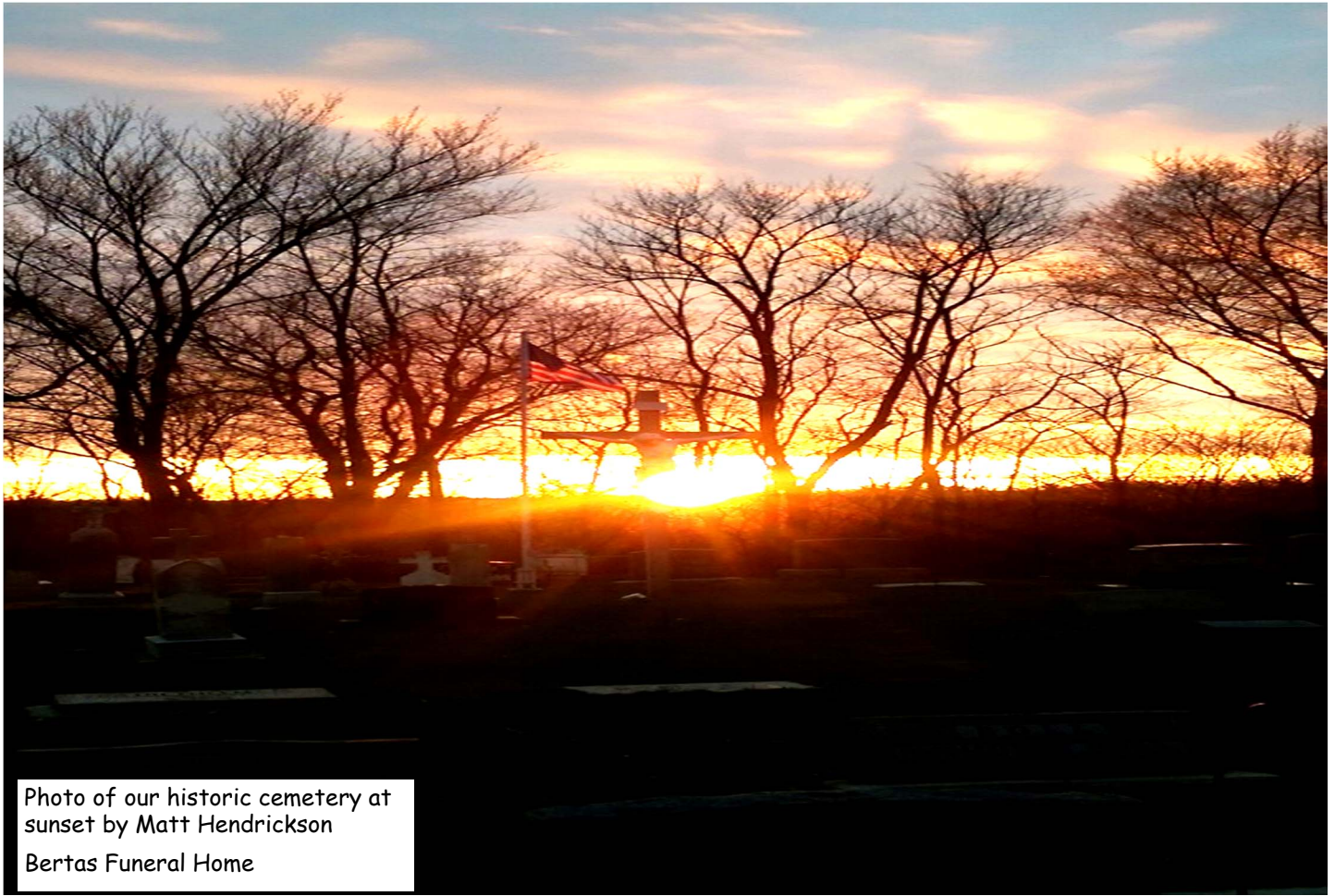


Photo of our historic cemetery at sunset by Matt Hendrickson
Bertas Funeral Home

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