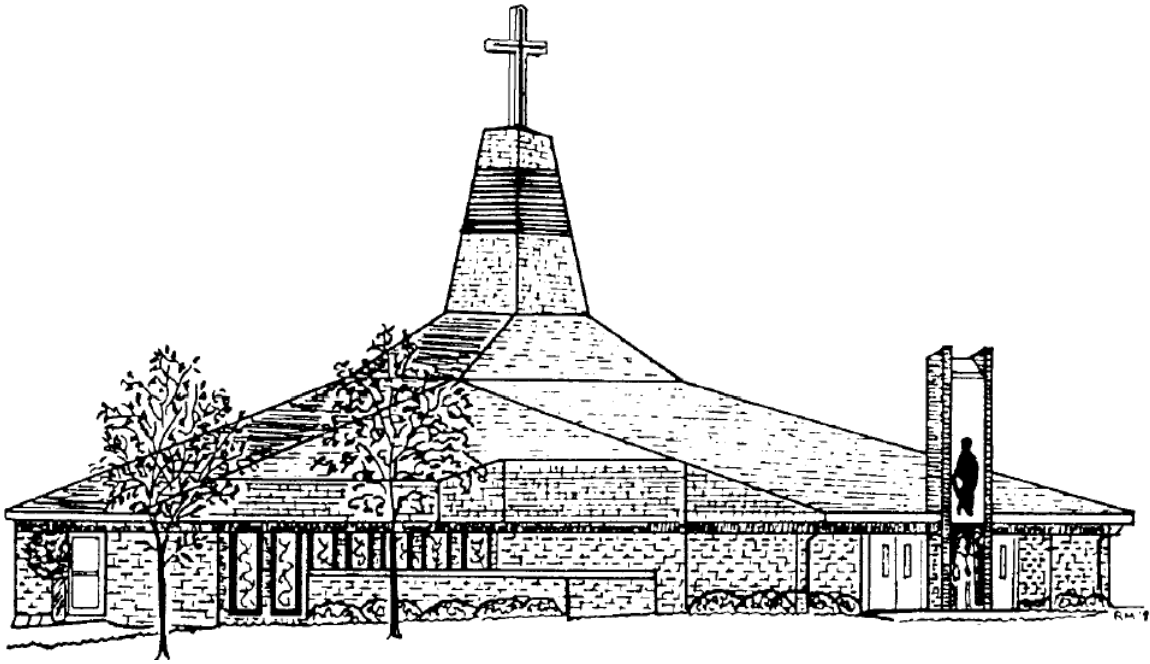


**St. Joseph Parish
of
Marion, Iowa**



**2008-2009
Annual Report**

Table of Contents

Pastor's Introduction	2
Pastor's Report	3
Associate Pastor's Report	4
Spiritual Ministry	6
Adult Education	7
Young Adult Ministry	8
Youth Ministry	9
Confirmation Ministry	10
Music Ministry	11
Census Coordinator	12
Parish Council Introduction	13
Finance and Administration Committee	14
Finance Development Committee	17
Liturgy Committee	19
Spiritual Life Committee	20
Community Life Committee	21
Deanery Council	23
Social Concerns Committee	24
Board of Education Introduction	28
St. Joseph School	28
Religious Education	29
Xavier High School	31

Pastor's Introduction
by Fr. John

Dear Parishioners,

This parish report is our opportunity as staff, parish council and committees to give you the status of our parish community from July 2008 to July 2009. It is impossible to give you all the details of parish activities, yet we intend to give you an overview of our accomplishments over the last fiscal year (July '08 to July '09).

Sacraments are the center of our parish life. Sunday celebration of the Eucharist (the center of our faith lives) is strong. We have greater participation by adults and youth in the liturgical ministries and the worship aid helps us to participate fully in our Eucharistic Celebration. Our Sunday Mass attendance had a slight decline (each year in October we have a count of the number of people at each Sunday liturgy).

- We have had:
1. 61 Infant/children Baptisms
 2. 2 Adult Baptisms
 3. 8 Receptions of Baptized Christians received in full Communion and confirmed
 4. 92 First Communions and First Reconciliations
 5. 69 Confirmations of youth
 6. 13 Marriages at St. Joseph Parish
19 Marriage preparations that took place
 7. 31 Funerals

Details of all the committees' activities will be within this report. We are developing and growing in our ministry to our parish community. "The Alpha Journey" has been very successful. The Spiritual Life Committee continues to find ways and materials to develop spirituality within our parish and homes. We will continue to have opportunities to explore and discern spiritual gifts by participating in a gift discernment process. Education remains strong. We continue to serve the flood victims and needy of our area and the world through our Social Concerns Committee. Community Life offers opportunities to build community. The finances of our parish continue to improve as we continue to support a good staff, liturgy, spirituality, education, and community life. We were able to reduce our debt in the past fiscal year. Our endowment fund has suffered because of the bad financial year but is recovering as the economy recovers. The blue envelopes enabled us to repair and improve our parish buildings.

Please take time to read this report.

Special thanks to all who serve and support our parish community as we grow in faith.

Pastor's Report
by Fr. John Gossman

The center of my life is presiding at the Sunday Eucharist, celebrating Sacraments and preaching.

I am blessed by God to be able to share God's grace with all of you. Everyday I am enriched and humbled by the loving presence of Jesus that I experience in the midst of this community.

The parish staff here is professional, hard working and faith-filled. Working with them is enriching and energizing. Everyday I thank God for the blessing that I have received in working with our parish staff. Mary Hauschildt has enriched our ministry to the elderly, sick and the homebound. Richard Stanaway plans to retire after this fiscal year. I am thankful for the blessing that Richard has been to us.

As Dean of the Cedar Rapids Deanery, I have been involved with many meetings with Msgr. Bleich. We have been working on a structure that will allow our deanery to plan for the future. Our deanery will have one or two priests less next year and two to five in five years. The parish leadership of all the parishes will be meeting to plan how we can best use the priests available, the reduction of masses in our parish communities, developing structures that will allow greater involvement of the laity, more lay staff where needed, and how to share the financial burden if there is any. The parish leadership will need to develop plans to present to Archbishop Hanus. He will make the ultimate decisions on priest placements and the parishes that will have pastoral administrators instead of a priest as a pastor. Planning is a time for sacrifice and growth. I pray that we will all grow in our faith because of this planning. Father Rod and I will continue to be sacramental priest for Springville and Mount Vernon. Our ministry to other parishes will become more of the norm in the future.

Please keep our parish community in your prayers.

God bless you for your support and shared faith.

Associate Pastor's Report by Fr. Rod Allers

Personal

This last year has been a time of growth, affirmation, and challenge. I have grown in my comfort level in my role as a priest and the duties for which that office is called to. I have become much more comfortable in my celebration of the Eucharist with the community; I have much less focus on the mechanics of how to celebrate Eucharist and much more focus on engaging with the community in the prayer and conversion that our participation in the Eucharist calls us to. Likewise, there has been growth in my identity as a priest. This is always part of a new priest's life; learning to move from one station in life to another and the expectations placed on me as well as the boundaries that are necessary for healthy living. I have grown in my understanding of the effect of the Sacraments in people's lives and have grown in my appreciation and understanding that they are integral parts of who we are as a Christian community.

I have found a significant amount of my identity as a priest in the way in which I have come to interact with our parish community. Our parish has affirmed and welcomed me as their priest and for this I am very grateful. I have enjoyed seeing growth that happens in individuals through open and honest communication and the courage and faith with which the people of St. Joseph's parish bring to bear in the messiness of their own lives. The common faith we hold plays itself out in so many concrete ways in our lives, whether it be how we bind together around those who have experienced the loss of a loved one, the way we celebrate with one another at baptisms, first communions, and other events, or even in simple ways that one individual reaches out to another.

The year has also been filled with challenges, some which have been overcome and some that will be perennial issues. One of the challenges which have been overcome is simply learning where I fit and how to work with parish staff (a challenge for anyone coming to a new position). The perennial issues are the issues that we will struggle with all of our lives. For example: How do we operate as a believing Body of Christ. We so frequently adapt secular models without understanding the implications. How do we move from being task oriented people to people oriented people? How do I cooperate in the work of God to help us understand that it is the people of St. Joseph who are the Church and not the building, the religious, or the clergy solely? How do I help myself and our community grow in the understanding that first fruits of time, talent and treasure belong to God, not our surplus?

It has been a pleasure, and highly rewarding, working with Fr. John. He has an excellent sense of Church as the incarnation of Christ. His practical wisdom and insight have aided me greatly in this transitional year. I have enjoyed living with him and working with him. He is a tremendous asset to this parish and to the Church. He has helped me learn to balance the demands of working with 8100 registered parishioners between three parishes with the idea of empowering the people of God to be the incarnation of Christ they are called to be. He is a man of conviction and dedication and strong moral sense.

Sacraments

Sacraments frequently mark transitions in our lives. Baptism marks the beginning of new life in Christ. Confirmation frequently marks a maturing in our faith. Marriage marks two becoming one and engaging on the rest of life as such. Anointing of the sick which marks a change in health and our expectations of life. These are only a few examples, but the point is this: Not

only do Sacraments mark out our times of transition in life; they also are true encounters with the risen Lord in our lives. The Sacraments are gifts of our Church that speak to us in significant and concrete ways of God's unconditional commitment to our fulfillment and Christ's unconditional commitment to his Church.

I am always moved at the power of the Sacraments. The variety of hands that present themselves at communion to grow intimacy as members of the Body of Christ, the sick disoriented who come to long enough to take part in the Sacrament in the anointing of the sick, the mother who begins to cry at the baptism of her child (because she truly recognizes the gift and the power of the Sacrament).

Our Sacraments and the way we celebrate them bring life. I am happy to participate in them with our parish community and I believe we do them well, communicating the sign and symbol, and growing in our ability to live the reality.

Liturgy

We still struggle with trying to get ministers of the liturgy to recognize the importance of their function. Most do, yet some fail to show up or to find replacements. This places a strain on our liturgy and suggests an area of growth for the understanding that all that we have and are, as well as all that we hope to be flows into and out of the Church's liturgies.

Our Liturgy Planning events provided real world expressions of our faith throughout Advent and Lent. In Advent members of our parish spoke before each mass concerning how they saw the incarnation of the readings already alive in our parish. In Lent we subtly complimented the Church's liturgy with secular road signs (like the merge sign – letting God merge with us, or even better us merging with God). These were ways in which I believe Sacramental signs were able to help break boundaries so that we could see real and true lived experiences within our own community.

Our Liturgy Function Committee carried out the planning of the liturgical planning events, providing us with those concrete examples. Our liturgies continue to help us understand who we are in light of our primary identity in life, that is: Loved children of God called to be in relation with another, and, committed to the fulfillment of others.

Social Concerns

We continue to try and grow our social concerns budget. We hold, as part of our faith that we must tithe; that is, that first fruits go to God. As a result we continue towards our goal of five percent of our parish budget going back out to others as a sign of our gratitude for our blessings. Although we are currently only in the low four percentile range we have committed forty thousand dollars to our community and to missions (this figure does not include separate mission collections).

We continue to strive for stronger parishioner interaction and knowledge as we believe that this effort is not an optional one but one of true discipleship. As a result of this understanding we have provided opportunities for political expression of our faith through a co-sponsorship of the Freedom of Choice Act postcard campaign, opportunities for participation in Habitat for Humanity projects as well as food drives.

Spiritual Ministry **by Mary Hauschildt**

As the new pastoral minister on staff this year, I would like to extend my gratitude to the parish for your prayers and support. Thank you.

My new responsibilities have included the following: working with shut-ins (making sure they receive communion at their homes), visiting our parish “young seniors” (75 and older), working with Barb Celichowski to develop “Health Moments” as part of our monthly senior lunches, visiting the hospitals once a week followed by a phone call/visit after returning home, monthly phone calls to approximately 40-50 of our seniors, phone call/visit to all parishioners with a significant loss, and helping to organize the offering of “Healthy Living”. This was presented by parishioner Kathy Bargary this past spring. Parishioners Deb Aasen, Kathy A’Hearn, Barb Celichowski and I have become trained and will be able to offer the class twice a year for all parishioners.

I have also continued my on-going ministry of sending cards on behalf of the staff/parish to commemorate significant wedding anniversaries, birthday of seniors, extending sympathy to those whose loved ones have died, and then also remembering them once again on the 1st anniversary of the death. Special thanks to Chris Mather and K’Dean Dunnwald who design the cards that are sent out.

As the staff representative from our parish, I provide the leadership to the MOMS program along with a team of 8 other young women. This past year our activities included the following: a fall retreat offering, spiritual Walk in the Park evening, Bunko evening, Blanket making gathering, an Advent retreat opportunity, book study offering during Lent, an 8 week session of the MOMS program, a Taste of St. Joseph Women Event, and lastly, leading of one of the evenings of the Stations of the Cross.

In the fall of 2005, Women’s Connection started as a spiritual support/friendship group for the widows of our parish. We meet each month of the year, with the exception of July, on the 2nd Thursday of the month. We continue to be strong. A regular group of 22-26 women attend the monthly gatherings. Our activities this past year included: a remembrance prayer service, welcoming gathering with panel extended to any newly widowed, bus trip to Gays Mills Apple Orchard, Speaker Sr. Mary Lou Podzenek, Master Gardener speaker, book review, Christmas Celebration/Lunch, trip to Sacred Heart Mother House, and a picnic.

In June of 2009, a new group was formed as a spiritual/friendship support for our widowers. Vern Vaske has been instrumental in helping me get this started/organized. So far, six men have joined in the activities, including a dinner with Fr. John the month of July.

The Discernment of Charism Program continues to be offered to all parishioners under the teaching leadership of Rodney Bluml, Judy Ramsey, Theresa Trenary, and Barb Celichowski. They, along with the interviewers and “Core Team”, organize the weekend opportunities. This past year, 15 parishioners went through the program in January. A renewal for all “Discernment of Charism” participants, approximately 65-70 parishioners, will be held in September.

Adult Formation By Rodney Bluml

The parish offered the St. Joseph Alpha Journey for the third time in 2008. Thirty participants met eleven Mondays for dinner, worship, a presentation on a basic tenant of faith, and small group discussion. The participants also attended an overnight retreat at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca on Nov. 1-2. The program is an evangelization effort designed to help people grow stronger and more comfortable in their relationship with Holy Spirit, Christ, and the Church. Sara Smith coordinated the meals, Mary Earlene Lewis coordinated the prayer team, and Janell Wickman coordinated the child care. Over 100 other parishioners served in support roles including preparing and serving meals, prayer team, retreat team, music ministry, and weekly child care.

Nearly sixty parishioners have engaged in a discernment process for lifting up spiritual gifts/charisms. The Siena Institute, hired by the Archdiocese of Dubuque, trained Clark White, Sharon Reilly, Theresa Trenary, Barb Celichowski, Judy Ramsey, Rodney Bluml and Mary Hauschildt to be interviewers and teachers for the Discerning Charisms; Living the Mission program which is being piloted at St. Joseph under the coordination of Mary Hauschildt. The seminar, interview, small group discernment cycle was offered three times this past year. Nine others served as support team: Victoria Brawner, Dennis and Kim Ternes, Becky Gassman, Pat O'Connor, Fr. John Gossman, Diane Grimm, and Virginia Fleming. In 2008-09, one of the three seminars offered was held in January with thirteen participants. The other two were cancelled for lack of enrollment.

The year-round parish RCIA process brought 2 adults to baptism at the Easter Vigil, and led 8 adults to full communion with the Catholic Church. The RCIA process meets about forty-six times a year for three to four hours. About seventy people assist in the process as sponsors, godparents, catechists, hospitality ministers, and Seder Meal hosts.

Scripture study is held year round. Last year the groups met about forty weeks. One third of the sessions were Lectionary study of the upcoming weekend readings. The remaining weeks were split between studies of *Women in the New Testament*, and *The Gospel of Mark*, using the Little Rock Scripture Study and a CD lecture series by Fr. John Donahue from Now You Know Media. Weekly listening guides were provided to assist with the study. We offer the two regular studies on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday mornings for 2-2.5 hours. The average attendance for these two sessions combined is forty-four people.

Our twenty-three wedding sponsor couples worked to prepare nineteen couples for Catholic marriage. This commitment asks them to meet four to five times for about two hours with their couple and then to attempt some post-marriage follow-up in the first year.

Close to two dozen parishioners attended CEW's as candidates or team members.

A Men of Action Prayer Group continues to meet weekly on Thursdays at 6:00 a.m. John Kaufmann has been facilitating that group.

One parishioner is in the three year lay formation program through the diocese.

Young Adult Ministry (20 & 30 somethings) **by Rodney Bluml**

This past year, St. Joseph parish launched a concerted outreach to the young adults within the parish by including this in my list of responsibilities. Typically, this group includes those who are 21 – 39 years old, married, single, and with or without children. The efforts this year were focused on building community through social gatherings, prayer opportunities, and a few field trips.

Specifically, the every other Monday evening gatherings in the St. Joseph Room drew an average of twelve people. The activities varied each time and included *lectio divina* (holy reading) on scripture followed by conversation; study of hot-button issues; walks for ice-cream; recitation of the rosary; watching movies; playing games; pot-lucks, barbeques, pumpkin carving, a progressive dinner, Chop Chef with Nick Janda, and plenty of refreshments.

In August, twelve young adults camped for a weekend at Pinicon Ridge Park.

In February, ten young adults went to the Winnebago Indian Reservation in northeast Nebraska for a weekend cultural immersion. While there, the group participated in a Native American sweat lodge ritual, assisted with a healing service, and prepared and served a meal to 120 people as part of the centennial celebration of the St. Augustine Mission's work with the Hochunk people.

In Lent, young adults participated in a 30-Hour Fast during which time they attended the Joan of Arcadia viewing, hung dry wall at St. Wenceslaus for eight hours, attended Mass and then ended the fast at the parish soup supper donating the equivalent money of skipped meals for future projects.

In May, an overnight retreat entitled "Forgiven" was offered at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca. Using a chapter from "The Shack" and the movie "Dead Man Walking" as inspiration, participants reflected on the elements of sin, forgiveness, and true reconciliation making personal icons to reflect these insights.

An average of twenty four of our parish young adults participated in the two, four-week sessions of Theology on Tap offered in the Cedar Rapids area this year. Victoria Brawner, Teresa Patterson, Rodney Bluml, Megan Gan, and Laura Webber all served on the Core Planning Team.

These are but a few of the many good works and gatherings of our faith-filled young adults. Our parish mission is to spiritually support this incredibly resourceful group as they participate in many civic and cultural venues, bringing the presence of God into the world. Go to our parish website to see upcoming activities and plan to join us.

Miscellaneous

24 parishioners and friends were among a group of 34 who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Israel, in March of this year. Bob & Sharon Sowadski, Jim and Mary Kay McDonald, Diane Morris, Lorraine Rudish, Lois & Rodney Ocenosak, Scott & Martha Wegener, Mary Johnson, Sean Smith, Rodney Bluml, Jesse Sheedy, Margaret Ferreter, Jim & Barbara Mead, Nancy & Dan Rigel, Don and Carol Bluml, Janice Smith, Jan Bencken, and Esther Micelli.

After completing twelve years of ministry in the parish, Pastoral Associate, Rodney Bluml, received permission to take a lay ecclesial minister's sabbatical in the months of May and June in order to read, write, reflect, and refresh. He continued to monitor the programs under his purview while away.

Youth Ministry by Kelly Ward

The Youth Ministry program at St. Joseph continues to grow. Our high school students participate in the Catalyst youth group. Any St. Joseph parish member grades 9-12 are welcome to attend and participate in Catalyst events. Catalyst meets several times each month for both formal and informal gatherings focusing on social, spiritual and service opportunities. Catalyst members participated in a fall photo scavenger hunt, hosted an 'Anything but Thanksgiving Dinner, held an Epiphany party, held an outdoor movie night, helped out at 7/8 grade events and assisted with Vacation Bible School. Several students participated in the archdiocesan 'Rapid Relief' project helping to dig out and renovate the basement of St. Wenceslas church, and distributing flood relief newsletters throughout flooded neighborhoods in SW Cedar Rapids. Other service projects this year included collecting, filling and delivering flood relief baskets and collecting basic hygiene and health supplies to be donated to the Community Free Health Clinic. Both Catalyst and Alliance youth groups also held a book drive in the early fall to help one of the Taylor Elementary teachers replace classroom books lost in the flood. The youth collected over 300 books and received over \$200 in donations for the Kindergarten/1st grade classroom. The high school students also served as Ministers of Hospitality, Eucharistic Ministers, Cantors, Accompanists and Lectors at one mass each month.

A high school Youth Commission was re-established this past year to provide leadership to the youth ministry programs. Made up of 7 high school youth representing grades 10-12 and both Xavier and public high schools, these students met on a monthly basis to plan and organize events for both the high school and middle school youth groups. The Youth Commission members exhibited strong leadership skills while assisting with the monthly middle school youth events. Perhaps the strongest leadership was exhibited at the Confirmation retreat this past year. Youth Commission members took on the challenge in assisting with activities and ice-breaker events throughout the retreat. As the retreat came to a close, several of the confirmation candidates approached the adult leadership team and asked how they, too, could become a part of the retreat team as the Youth Commission. It is through this group that we have been able to continue to 'Ignite the Spirit' of the youth of St. Joseph Parish. Members of the current Youth Commission will continue to serve next year while 4 new members will be selected in the fall to serve along with them.

Alliance, our 7th and 8th grade youth group, met monthly throughout the year. The goal of the 7th and 8th grade events is to provide social opportunities to early teens so they can begin to build relationships with a common faith support. Alliance events are high energy and filled with fun, laughter and enthusiasm. An average of 30 young people attends the events each month. The Alliance teens have also served as volunteers during the Ash Wednesday Prayer service, weekly liturgies and Vacation Bible School. St. Joseph parish will host the city-wide middle school youth rally in October 2009.

The youth from St. Joseph continue to participate in city-wide and archdiocesan events, including a trip to Lost Island Waterpark in Waterloo, a Middle School Youth Rally held last fall at LaSalle and a High School Youth Rally held in Waterloo.

In November of 2009 we will send forth 24 high school youth and 6 adults to the National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City. NCYC is held every two years. This year the Archdiocese of Dubuque will be sending the second largest delegation in the nation, surpassing Rochester, New York who typically holds the spot for most participants.

Confirmation Ministry by Judy Ramsey

The mission of our Confirmation preparation is to provide opportunities for our teens to create a relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Combined with this relationship is a foundation in Church teachings. The teens of St. Joseph are a fabulous group of people. They are eager to learn how God fits into their life. There are many outside influences that can weigh heavy on our teens. Through the encounters with their small group leaders, parents and parish staff we hope to address those issues while encouraging them to become the Gospel message brought to life. In May 2009, Msgr. Bleich along with Fr. John and Fr. Rod celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation with 69 candidates from St. Joseph's. Our teens spent their 9th and 10th grade school years preparing for this sacrament. Their journey includes large group renewal days, small group meetings, rites, a weekend retreat and service projects. Adults in our parish aid our teens through prayer partnerships, leading small groups, leading the retreat and coordinating and supporting service projects.

A few new endeavors for our program over this past year:

-At our In God's Service Renewal Day we hosted Kids Against Hunger. Through the generous support of the loose coin collection at mass, we were able to fund the making of 2000 meals for a mission project overseas. Kids Against Hunger brought all of their supplies to St. Joseph's and the candidates spent the morning packaging the meals and boxing them for distribution.

-We added a dinner to our Phase 2 program we called the Apostles Celebration. Parents were served a meal by the candidates as a means of thanking them for their support. Before the meal, the candidates laid hands on their parents and returned a blessing the parents offered to their candidate at the beginning of the year.

- Four members of our Youth Commission attended our retreat and ran the social activities. The feedback on the powerful testimony to their faith through their presence was wonderful. Many newly confirmed spoke at their interviews as to how they would like to help serve in that role during retreats in the future.

Our Celebration of Confirmation was a vibrant liturgy where all involved, candidates, parents, family, friends, and clergy were excited to be celebrating together. The Spirit of the Lord is alive and well in the hearts of many here at St Joseph's.

Music Ministry Report by Richard Stanaway

Music Ministry serves the entire congregation of St. Joseph's Parish. The weekend liturgies serve as the starting point for this ministry.

As Coordinator of Music Ministries, I select the music for the liturgies, after careful study of the readings for the weekend Masses. I also coordinate a schedule of cantors, choirs and accompanists for all weekend Masses; assemble books for the musicians to use, and rehearse with musicians in preparation for the weekend Masses. Members of the parish serve as the cantors, accompanists, and choir members. They serve by helping lead the congregation in singing praises and prayers to our Lord. These groups also provide music for special Masses during the Advent, Christmas, Lenten and Easter seasons.

There are currently 6 choirs who assist with the music liturgy for the Masses. The Parish Choir which I direct and accompany; JAM a high school age youth choir under the direction of Alex Gerleman; Minor Miracles a choir for children in grades 4-8 was led by Bonnie Bluml until January of this year when she submitted her resignation. This was a paid position. The Minor Miracles Choir is currently in need a new director for this fall; MAC a men's choir led by Bill Perreault; Harmony, a women's vocal ensemble led by Kristen Perreault and the Carillon [Bell] choir under the direction of Terri Hodge.

The parish is blessed to have 9 volunteer accompanists and 22 volunteer cantors, and 4 volunteer choir directors, serving the parish weekend music ministry. These people are a very important part of the celebration of our weekend liturgies and give many hours of service to St. Joseph Music Ministry.

The Resurrection Choir under my direction provides music for all funeral Masses celebrated at St. Joseph each year. We also provide music for the Good Friday service and All Souls Day Mass. I maintain a prepared listing of suggested music for the funeral mass. This is kept current and updated as needed.

As Coordinator of Music Ministries I meet with all couples planning a wedding at St. Joseph Church helping them select the music and musicians for their wedding. As coordinator I keep a listing of appropriate music for the wedding ceremonies.

Other duties that I have as the Coordinator of Music Ministries are to attend staff meetings and Liturgy Function Committee meetings; prepare in-service and resources for church musicians; maintain the music budget and current licensing for music printing and recruitment of music ministry members.

The music program at St. Joseph's continues to grow. I appreciate so much the volunteer musicians who take part in the Music Ministry of St. Joseph Parish.

After much thought and prayer, I have decided to retire at the end of my next contract which ends June 30, 2010. I have enjoyed working with all different aspects of the Music Ministry of St. Josephs and I will miss the people of St. Josephs very much. I am truly looking forward to spending more time with my family in retirement.

Census Coordinator by Lona Sedlacek

Parish Schedules

I maintain schedules for ongoing activities in the parish including: volunteer receptionists, RCIA food donations, etc.

Parish Mailings

Periodically we send out parish-wide mailings, and I find 6-8 volunteers to help with collating, stuffing, labeling, etc. These mailings can be anything from Xavier, seasonal information, stewardship, etc. I then organize the finished product for bulk mailing. We typically have volunteer receptionists “stuff” our bulletins but if we need additional help I call a few people to come in.

Parish Ministry Needs

I keep the Time and Talent information up to date and on the years that we hand out a new one I contact the parish committee leaders with the results so that new parishioners can be plugged in to that particular ministry. I also supply individuals seeking volunteers with a list of people showing interest in that field.

Parish Census

I maintain the census for the parish. With 2000 families it is imperative that we have up-to-date information. This includes keeping current addresses, inputting new parishioners and deleting those who have moved from the system. As staff members, committee members and council need specific information I provide the reports for their request or print labels for them. This year I was involved in a mailing with the Endowment Committee and listings for the Board of Education, Religious Ed, School P.R. Committee, Confirmation, Youth Ministry, etc. providing them with lists per their specifications.

Assistance to the bookkeeper

When the bookkeeper is gone on a Monday I come in and assist the money counters with the balancing and recording of weekly contributions and complete appropriate reports. At the end of the year I print all the year end contribution statements and ready them for mailing. I recruit a few volunteers (typically from the money counters crew) to assist in this process.

New to parish volunteers

A few years ago I organized a group of women who call on our new parishioner within a few months after they have registered. The goal is to not only welcome the new families but to also check to see if they have any questions so that we can refer them to the correct person/committee. It has been received very well and we will continue to make the calls.

Parish Council Introduction by Bruce Takes

The Parish Council consists of ten members supporting six committees and the Board of Education plus Fr. John Gossman. Bruce Takes is the chair. The committees (and their liaisons) are: Finance and Administration (Jeff Peters and Juergen Bruckner), Liturgy (Michele Mains), Spiritual Life (Michele Brock and George Cleppe), Community Life (Paula Ladage), Deanery Council (Bob Celichowsky), Social Concerns (Steve Determan) and Board of Education (Rick McAllister). In addition Bruce Takes supports the Financial Development Subcommittee. Each of these committees has its own focus to help provide stewardship opportunities to parishioners. Their activities and accomplishments are included as separate reports.

We continue to work on our parish goals that were set in place in 2006. They are:

- To deepen the understanding of Stewardship so that all members may know and share their gifts
- To increase participation of the adult community in education and faith formation opportunities
- To increase the number of parishioners participating in spiritual, social, and volunteering opportunities to foster a more engaged community.

Our endowment fund is growing, supporting both the much needed school repairs and education enrichment for our leadership. The fund is always looking to grow larger so please keep this in mind when extra money becomes available. Because of what is taking place in the stock market it was not as great a source of income as it had been in previous years. The endowment fund just gives the parish the income and does not touch the principal. Your contribution will generate earnings for many years to come, providing on a long-term basis for the success of our parish community. To learn more about the Endowment Fund visit the St. Joseph Parish website or call the parish office.

Alpha, a program for faith enrichment, has continued to be offered by Spiritual Life Committee. The response has continued to be very good. Our Social Concerns Committee has increased our parish's stewardship contribution through time, talent and treasures within their many programs. To name a few of these programs: Mexican Mission, Senior Living, Helping Hands, Catholic Worker House, Habitat for Humanity, Respect for Life and many more. And of course, we were fortunate to be able to have Father Rodney Allers serve our parish along with Father John Gossman.

We have added a program to work with home-bound people of our parish. Although our parish experienced greater parishioner participation this year, there is an area that needs to be mentioned within this introduction. We still struggle to get more people to run for parish council. It is a three year commitment which entails meetings the fourth Tuesday of every month, except December and July. Participation of our parishioners on the Parish Council and the many parish committees is strongly encouraged. The council and committees are excellent opportunities for each of us to share our time and talents with fellow parishioners. Please review these activities and see where your talents lie. Call the Parish office for more information.

Finance and Administration Committee by Juergen Bruckner

The committee, and its focus areas, consists of Jeff Peters and Erwin Froehlich (Budgeting), Vincent Rodriguez and Maryann Petesich (Fundraising), Theresa Lynch, (Administration Liaison), Douglas Boe (St Joseph Board of Education), Juergen Bruckner (Buildings and Grounds), and Father Gossman. We meet on the third Thursday of the month from 5:30 to at most 7:00 PM. We can always use a few more good parishioners.

We ended 2008-2009 with a budget balance of about \$24K due to the generosity of responsible parishioners and watchful execution by the parish staff to not exceed individual budgets and \$60,000 in donations. This includes \$16,000 budgeted for debt reduction. The balanced budget will allow us to apply the \$14,000 held in reserve from last year awaiting a balanced budget to reduce our archdiocesan debt to \$115,000. We will hold the 2008-2009 \$16,000 debt reduction in reserve pending the 2009-2010 budget outcome.

Results of these focus areas are summarized below:

Fund Raising

We had two events last fiscal year (which runs from July to June). Jake Weaver and Tom Coppa again led a golf outing in August 2008. New this fiscal year was a bowling FUNdraiser, held in November under the leadership of Vince Rodriguez. Revenue may be small but fellowship is large.

Buildings and Grounds

This year we had unscheduled maintenance which took up all of this year's funds and some of our reserve. In the winter the water line into the church broke. After a quick winter patch, the line was replaced in the spring from the city outlet into the church. The electrical service entrance to the school also needed repair and replacement.

We also finished upgrading the parish kitchen counters which also gave us a chance to improve the dishwashing work flow.

And the parking lot continues its annual maintenance until it needs a costly rebuilding.

A group has been formed to look at ways of upgrading the church flooring, as the 15-year-old carpet is wearing through. The present duct tape patches can only go so far. If it becomes a tripping hazard we may need a patch repair until a more permanent solution is agreed upon and funding found as the permanent repair is beyond the capability of the normal bricks and mortar funding.

Administrative

Terry Lynch assisted Fr. Gossman in providing human services support to the administration staff.

Budgeting

This year's and next year's proposed budgets are shown below. The categories are based on the new Archdiocese guidelines for all parishes. Next year's budget represents a 2.5% increase over the previous year's budget. Also we are receiving \$10,680 from the parishes in Springville and Mt. Vernon for the sacramental priest support that Fr. Rod and Fr. John are providing.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>08-09 Budget</u>	<u>08-09 Actual</u>	<u>09-10 Budget</u>
Budgeted Envelopes	\$1,288,450	\$1,266,952	\$1,320,022
Sacramental Offerings	\$5,000	\$4,745	\$5,100
Fundraisers	\$5000	\$6,180	\$7,000
Donations	0	\$60,074	0
Other (Bulletin, Rental)	\$5,850	\$7,154	\$5,950
Exchange Funds	\$19,900	\$52,485	\$19,950
Support from St. Isidore and St. John	\$10,670	\$10,680	\$10,680
(Operating Income Subtotal)	(\$1,334,870)	(\$1,408,270)	(\$1,368,702)
Bricks and Mortar	<u>\$51,250</u>	<u>\$50,682</u>	<u>\$52,275</u>
Total Income	\$1,386,120	\$1,458,952	\$1,420,977
Parish Administration			
(Priest & Pastoral Associates)	\$173,142	\$171,102	\$179,948
Parish Life			
Grade School Subsidy	\$585,862	\$585,862	\$591,721
Religious Ed Subsidy	\$67,743	\$67,743	\$68,420
Adult Ed/Spiritual Life Subsidy	\$16,250	\$14,452	\$17,000
Xavier High Subsidy	\$141,000	\$141,948	\$149,045
Youth/Relief	\$13,077	\$17,836	\$13,500
Music, Sanctuary etc.	\$28,000	\$31,638	\$28,000
(Subtotal)	(\$851,932)	(\$859,479)	(\$867,686)
Parish Administration	\$109,522	\$100,216	\$114,891
Operation and Maintenance			
Of Parish Facilities	\$57,303	\$48,773	\$53,044
Fixed Charges			
Diocesan Assessments	\$22,000	\$23,160	\$22,500
Insurance	\$10,000	\$9,536	\$15,000
Regional Assessment	\$6,300	\$6,287	\$6,300
Lay Benefits	\$35,033	\$37,374	\$41,039
Interest	\$9,500	\$5,355	\$8,500
Debt Reduction	[\$16,000]	[\$16,000]	[\$2,000]
(Subtotal)	(\$98,833)	(\$97,712)	(\$95,339)
Exchange Funds	\$13,600	\$29,269	\$13,600
Social Action	<u>\$40,000</u>	\$39,159	<u>\$44,335</u>
(Operating Expense Subtotal)	(\$1,344,332)	(\$1,345,710)	(\$1,368,843)
Building Improvements	\$41,250	\$89,210	\$52,275
Total Expenses	\$1,385,582	\$1,434,920	\$1,421,118

Items in brackets are obligations to be carried over into next year.

Weekly Offering

Please review your weekly offering to see how much we share God's gifts to us. We have tried to set a Judeo-Christian example by increasing our outreach this year from 4.1% to 4.4% with a goal to reach 5% in 2 more years. If the 1000 St. Joseph giving families increased their support by \$1/week or \$5/month on the average, we can meet this challenge with little individual sacrifice.

Breakdown of Funds by Range

	<u>Amount Given</u>	<u># of Contributors</u>	<u>Percentage of Contributors</u>	<u>Total Given</u>	<u>% Given</u>
0.00	- 0.00	742	36.92 %	0.00	0.00 %
0.01	- 25.00	68	3.38 %	1097.00	0.09 %
25.01	- 50.00	63	3.13 %	2702.00	0.21 %
50.01	- 75.00	39	1.94 %	2476.00	0.20 %
75.01	- 100.00	46	2.29 %	4304.00	0.34 %
100.01	- 200.00	116	5.77 %	17520.24	1.38 %
200.01	- 300.00	118	5.87 %	30905.34	2.44 %
300.01	- 400.00	67	3.33 %	23736.00	1.87 %
400.01	- 500.00	68	3.38 %	31296.50	2.47 %
500.01	- 600.00	92	4.58 %	51443.00	4.06 %
600.01	- 700.00	51	2.54 %	33174.53	2.62 %
700.01	- 800.00	51	2.54 %	38920.50	3.07 %
800.01	- 900.00	43	2.14 %	37020.00	2.92 %
900.01	- 1000.00	31	1.54 %	29637.00	2.34 %
1000.01	- 1500.00	160	7.96 %	198772.00	15.68 %
1500.01	- 2000.00	82	4.08 %	139779.38	11.03 %
2000.01	- 2500.00	56	2.79 %	128274.88	10.12 %
2500.01	- 3000.00	33	1.64 %	89904.26	7.09 %
3000.01	- 3500.00	25	1.24 %	80895.00	6.38 %
3500.01	- 4000.00	16	0.80 %	59724.09	4.71 %
4000.01	- 4500.00	7	0.35 %	30538.00	2.41 %
4500.01	- 5000.00	11	0.55 %	52665.00	4.16 %
5000.01	- 10000.00	23	1.14 %	159467.47	12.58 %
10000.01	- 15000.00	2	0.10 %	23200.00	1.83 %
15000.01	- 20000.00	0	0.00 %	0.00	0.00 %
20000.01	- #####	0	0.00 %	0.00	0.00 %
Total		2010		1267452.19	
Average contribution of those giving =		999.57			
Average contribution of all families =		630.57			

A summary of the weekly budget offerings for last year is shown above. Some care must be exercised when looking at the data. While we have about 2000 families in our books, about 1/3 are not active members giving very little and perhaps attending church infrequently. By and large about 1/3 of the parish families provide 90% of the parish funds. The remaining 1/3 provide less than \$10/week. This is not meant for us to judge others but, as Christ always admonished, to judge ourselves whether we are doing enough to spread the gospel and help those less fortunate than we are. Let me close by thanking you again for your continued support in meeting St. Joseph's financial commitments.

**Financial Development Subcommittee
by Bruce Takes**

The June 2008 to May 2009 Financial Development Committee is made up of members, Bob Anderson, Bruce Takes, Father Gossman, Dave Bowen, Mark Ahlers, Bill Humbert, Erwin Froehlich, Michelle Schaffer, and Sean Rice.

The Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 a.m. at Perkins Restaurant off Collins Road.

This year Dave Bowen is leading the committee as chairman. Bruce Takes is vice chair and provides minutes from each meeting. Sean Rice is the representative from the School Board, and Bruce Takes is the representative from the parish council. Bill Humbert resigned from the committee last month with gratitude of past service and stewardship.

The Financial Report was presented in June of 2008 as follows:

Endowment Fund	\$444,918.64
Loan Balance	\$ 10,437.14
Holding Account (For Transfer to Endowment)	<u>\$ 23,956.20</u>
Endowment Sub-Total	\$479,311.98
Holding Account (No transfer to Endowment)	<u>\$ 58,956.44</u>
Total	\$538,268.42

The Financial Report was presented in May of 2009 as follows:

<u>A. Archdiocese Endowment Fund:</u>	
Archdiocese Endowment Fund (after endowment loss)	\$ 350,535.44
Loan	\$ 9,287.61
Holding Account (Transfer to Endowment)	<u>\$ 0000.00</u>
Endowment Sub-Total	\$ 359,823.05
Holding Account (No transfer to Endowment)	<u>\$ 61,749.43</u>
Total	\$421,572.48
<u>B. Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation Fund:</u>	

GCRCF Account Balance (Mar. report)	\$ 4,817.44
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Endowment Fund Activity from June 2008 to End of May 2009

Endowment Fund A

St. Joseph Parish Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund received in donations and memorials \$ 6,852.38 for the last fiscal year.

The Endowment Fund had an investment (paper) loss of \$102,682.38 for the last fiscal year.

The previous six months had an investment (paper) loss of \$23,705.20.

The May 2008 loss	\$23,705.20
The Oct 2008 loss	\$24,824.03
The May 2009 loss	<u>\$77, 858.35</u>
Total amount to be repaid to the Endowment	\$126,387.58

Endowment Fund B

St. Joseph's Parish of Marion Agency Friends Fund

This fund was formed in December of 2008 with contributions of \$4,000. The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation March 2009 report had additional contributions of \$1,000 bringing the total contribution level to \$5,000. The Fund has an ending March balance of \$4,817.44 which equates to an investment loss \$182.56 since inception.

The committee reviewed multiple fund requests from St. Joseph School teachers relating to continuing education expenses. The committee recommended to the Finance Committee "a pool of \$2,300 to be allocated by the Board of Education. The Parish council approved the recommendation of The Finance Committee. Funds have been placed in reserve for this use.

The committee reviewed a fund request for \$15,000 for the School electrical repairs. The committee approved the recommended to the Finance Committee. The Parish council approved the recommendation of The Finance Committee.

The last 12 months of communication and topics from the FDC meeting minutes were as follows;

- Provide a Financial Overview for the finance committee & parish (Meeting Minutes)
- Provide quarterly newsletter article for the church bulletin insert (educational & promotion of the Endowment Fund)
 - Bruce Takes submitted a newsletter targeting awareness of the Endowment Envelope.
 - Mark Ahlers newsletter targeted information on IRA contributions.
 - Erwin Froehlich wrote about the changes in our economy and stock market.
 - Dave Bowen will target information regarding the Greater Cedar Rapids Foundation and the second Endowment Fund option.
- The second Endowment Fund "St. Joseph's Parish of Marion Agency Endowment Fund" was established in December 2008.
 - Bud Synhorst from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation assisted the Financial Development Committee in presenting the new Endowment to the Finance Committee.
 - The second Endowment Fund "St. Joseph's Parish of Marion Agency Endowment Fund" was recommended by the Finance Committee to the Parish Council. The Parish Council approved the recommendation to form the second Endowment.

- The Endowment Fund offers tax credit incentives to donors. The Endowment Fund donor can receive up to 20% in Iowa tax credits that can be used over a 5 year period. The fund was started with contributions of \$4,000.
- The Committee conducted an Endowment educational and target awareness campaign.
 - An initial introduction letter was sent October 9th. Within two weeks of the mailing FDC members contacted recipients of the mailing. Teams met with interested parishioners to inform about the benefits of the St. Joseph Endowment Fund. There were four teams with 2 members to a team. Each team had 10 to 11 names to contact. If you would like to be contacted please call any member of the FDC.
 - The committee team members received positive results from phone calls and meetings with parishioners. Some parishioners were going to take action with their estate planning or make a contribution. Others expressed they plan to continue to support the Endowment in the future. Many parishioners appreciated the letter of thanks and personal contact made by the committee.
- The Financial Development Committee goals for 2009.
 - 1. Continue to distribute quarterly newsletter.
 - 1st Q. Michelle Schaffer
 - 2nd Q. Erwin Froehlich
 - 3rd Q. Dave Bowen
 - 4th Q. Bob Anderson
 - 2. Update the Endowment Fund website.
 - 3. Conduct presentations to parishioners in the fall on Endowment Funds
 - 4. Update the Endowment Estate Planning Brochure and create a new brochure that promotes and informs readers about the two Endowment Funds
- Long Term Goals
 - Increase the contributions to the endowment fund that meets or exceeds the fund balance of 1 million dollars in 5 years,
 - 5 year goal (November, 2011)-\$1,000,000
 - 3 year goal (November, 2009)-\$650,000
 - 1 year goal (November, 2007)-\$500,000

The Committee would like to thank everyone who helped make this year successful for the Endowment Fund and all the support that was given to the Financial Development Committee. Your contributions continue to provide support to the needs of the parish now, and in the future. Anyone interested in learning more about the Endowment Fund or the Financial Development Committee, please visit the parish web site at www.stjoesmarion.org and click on St. Joseph Parish Endowment Fund Information.

**Liturgy Function Committee
by Michele Mains**

The Liturgy Function committee met approximately eight times during the last year. The committee members consist of six members each representing a facet of the liturgy and mass preparation: children's liturgy, environment (this includes decorating the altar and any special requirements during Lent and Advent), preaching, music, ushers, ministers and ministries (lectors, Eucharistic ministers), and servers. It also includes a member of the parish council whose purpose is to provide information back to the council. Fr. Rod presides over the meetings. Sean Smith, our deacon, is also a member of

the committee. The liturgy planning committee discusses the major themes from the readings. It is then up to the liturgy function committee to discuss and implement these themes.

The meetings may include status reports. For example, if servers are needed it is brought to attention so that notices are put in the bulletin and training sessions planned. Specifics are dealt with during our major liturgical seasons, Lent and Advent. Liturgical themes are discussed and approved by the committee members. The music director then coordinates the music. This must meet the approval of Fr. John. The parish has ample numbers of lectors and Eucharistic ministers to meet our mass schedule. Several are commissioned each Lent.

The committee spends a good deal of time discussing how improvements can be made with all parts of the liturgy. For example, Fr. Rod and Deacon Sean discussed ways of how their preaching can be evaluated. They considered how to get feedback from parishioners. They want to know if their homilies are meaningful, did they have practical value, did they inspire people to know God more or change their lives. The committee also discussed how the church can increase mass attendance. No definite plans were made. This is definitely a difficult task but deemed worthy of ongoing discussion.

For the lectors, there was discussion on improving the way the readings are read so that they become a proclamation of God's word. Efforts to improve the accountability for the lectors and Eucharistic ministers were brought up. Some ministers are not showing up for their scheduled mass. These efforts to hold the ministers accountable are not meant to impugn anyone but to reinforce the sanctity and reverence for the mass.

Overall, the committee seeks to uphold and implement the major themes from the readings of the mass as decided by the liturgy planning committee. This is coordinated with the music director who also communicates with all of the various musical groups in the parish. It keeps track and handles scheduling of all the lectors, Eucharistic ministers, and servers.

Spiritual Life Committee by George J. Cleppe

The four weeks of Advent, prayer cards were made up that were handed out after each mass. Each week had different gifts of the Holy Spirit, discerned from the reading for that week and a prayer on the other side.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is a group of ladies from our parish that get together and pray while they knit shawls. These are for people who are ill and need the comfort and prayers knitted into these shawls.

The Word Among Us is a booklet that has scripture reading for the day and a meditation on the daily readings. These have been available during Lent and Easter at the church entrances.

At Easter, Fr John and Fr Rodney presented Easter Prayer Experience. The topics were Prayer as Listening, Centering Prayer, Prayer of Petition, Meditation using Ignatian Prayer Form, Meditation using Augustinian Prayer Form, Meditation using Franciscan Prayer Form and Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise. These were held Saturday mornings during Easter.

Three Friday evenings, starting March 6th, were “Movie Night” for teens and adults featuring Joan of Arcadia, which was a TV series. This series is about a teenage girl named Joan, who God talks to and how her interaction with others affected people. After watching the show there was a discussion.

“The Traveling Last Supper was held at St Joe’s with Faith Lutheran Church attending. They put on a great play of the Last Supper with some great music. The people are from Dubuque County. The group has been doing this for 10 years in different areas.

To get the word out for Lay Formation, which will be held in Cedar Rapids, we had witnessing before masses and articles put into the bulletin. There were also informational meetings at different parishes that were put in the bulletins.

March 23 @ St. John 23rd 7:00 to 8:00

March 24 @ St. Pius 7:00 to 8:00

March 30 @ Mt. Vernon 7:00 to 8:00

The following is a list of things we are looking at doing next year:

- Having a retreat for 55 and older age group. Fr John has material from a parish in Minnesota that had such a retreat called “Aging All Ready”.
- Frank Runyeon puts on an awesome one man religious plays and biblical dramas. He has presented “Hollywood vs. Faith” and other presentations. He is going to be at St John’s in Mt Vernon and we can possibly share the cost with St Johns to bring him in.
- Paulist Productions creates film and television programs that reveal God presence in the contemporary human experience. They are going to be at Elizabeth Ann Seton. At this time we don’t have all the details.
- Phil Lenahan is an accountant partnered with Our Sunday Visitor and Veritas Financial Ministries. They offer small group study featuring a seven step program to achieving financial freedom.
- Stewardship workshop that we found online sounded interesting. We need more information to get on this workshop.
- We feel there needs to be a transition from the Alpha program leading people into the Charism Program. There, you explore your gifts and talents and then join the ministry that matches your gifts.
- There is an Evangelical Catholic program now being used in Madison, WI. Clark is getting more information.
- Michael Talbot is the top selling Catholic concert artist in the world. We would like to see if he would have a concert at St Joe’s.
- Putting a section in the bulletin asking for parishioners’ ideas of what they would like to see in our parish with subsequent discussions of the ideas.
- Having a retreat for empty nesters. When the kids are gone and it’s just you and me, what do we do? No agendum at this time.

**Community Life Committee
by Paula Ladage**

The Parish Community Life (PCL) Committee experienced something of a “re-vitalization” this 2008 - 2009 fiscal year. Since the PCL Committee had not been in the habit of holding regular meetings for some time, we have tried to reinvigorate the “team” spirit by calling a few committee meetings. While we feel the need to gather as a group more often, we don’t necessarily anticipate having regular meetings every month, rather maybe bi-monthly meetings, or even “as needed” to some degree. For a

number of years, the various PCL events and activities have been chaired by certain designated committee members, and these committee members were willing to continue in those capacities. As such, therefore, it was the consensus of the group to not elect a chairman or secretary at this time. The Parish Council Liaison to the PCL Committee, Paula Ladage, will call meetings and record minutes. The members of the Parish Community Life Committee are: Holly Hackett, Pam Hyberger, Ken Klingler, Sharron Konzen, Paula Ladage, Audra McEnany, Charlotte Osterhaus, Dan Palmersheim, Marian Palmersheim, Maryann Petesich, and Lona Sedlacek.

The **first event** sponsored by the Parish Community Life Committee was a **bus trip to a Chicago Cubs/ St Louis Cardinals baseball game** at Wrigley Field in Chicago. Ken Klingler arranged for this event. The trip was held on August 8, 2008, and we had a full (54-passenger) busload of people. The per person cost for trip and game in 2008 was \$76. Because of the amount of interest last year, we have expanded to two bus trips rather than one this year. The 2009 trip is also being arranged by Ken Klingler, assisted by Tom Coppa for the second bus load. The two trips this year will be Saturday July 11 and Sunday July 12, 2009. The 2009 cost is \$97 per person. (The increase in cost was due to new ticket arrangements, requiring purchase of tickets for additional less-popular games.) Presently all seats are filled on the Sunday bus this year and only 5 seats are left on the Saturday bus trip (which amounts to a total of 103 people taking advantage of this opportunity). The charge per person each year fully reimburses the expenses incurred, so there is no net impact to parish funds.

The **second event** sponsored by the Parish Community Life Committee was a **Christmas Sing-Along and Hot Dog and Chili Supper** held on Sunday December 7, 2008. This event was chaired by Sharron Konzen and Co-Chaired by Maryann Petesich. The mix of young and old parishioners first enjoyed Christmas carols in the church led by Joan Boche accompanied on the piano by Mary Klingler. And Maryann Petesich was enthusiastic in helping the crowd put the Christmas spirit into the songs! After the carols, the crowd filtered downstairs to the Church Hall for a delicious supper of hot dogs and chili, snacks, drinks, cookies and dessert bars. Chili donations were from five PCL members and one parishioner, Jenny Butz, and workers at the supper included 4 PCL members and their children, and Jenny Butz. Those attending were asked to bring a dozen cookies or bars to share. We had our biggest crowd of the last several years—70 people, plus workers. Free-will donations were also better than expected, totaling \$174. After expenses (all chili and dessert bars and cookies were donated and there were some supply donations), the net proceeds of \$120 were disbursed as follows: forwarded \$100 cash to the parish office earmarked for St. Vincent de Paul, and also a check for \$20 made out to St. Vincent de Paul directly.

Our **third event** has been an annual event at St Joseph's for several years, and that was **Spud Night**, which was held this year on Saturday March 21st, 2009 after the 4:30 PM Mass. This event was planned and chaired by Dan and Marian Palmersheim. Due to the death of Dan's mother, Lona and Jim Sedlacek took over working the event on March 21st. Pam Hyberger and Lona Sedlacek designed the flyer and copied/distributed/ inserted them in the bulletin, respectively. Lona phoned for volunteers to provide desserts. A number of parishioners were recruited by the Palmersheims to help prepare and serve the meal. On the menu was a potato bar with a variety of toppings, salad, dessert, and drinks. Spud Night was a great success, with a greater number of guests than ever before enjoying the delicious food. Free will offerings totaled \$503.75. After expenses of \$207.75 were subtracted, the net profit was \$296.00. This profit was forwarded to the Parish Office for parish use.

A **fourth event** was a **parish reception for the RCIA candidates after the Easter Vigil** service. This year that was held on Saturday evening April 11, 2009. As in past years, Holly Hackett took charge of this reception, and provided a first-class menu of cheese, crackers, fruit kabobs, cucumber sandwiches, cake, punch and wine, and even chocolate-covered strawberries, all displayed on pretty spring tables. The Hackett family and the Rick and Danielle Seger family along with Jenny Butz helped serve. Significant donations of food were made by Holly Hackett and Danielle Seger. A crowd of approximately 100 (maybe not as large a crowd this year) helped acknowledge and recognize the reception of RCIA candidates into the St Joseph parish.

The final and **fifth event** was a **reception for the high school graduates**. The graduates of the parish were recognized at the 11 AM Mass on Sunday June 14, 2009. The Community Life Committee provided and served cookies and punch and coffee after Mass. Marian and Dan Palmersheim were in charge of the reception, set-up and clean-up. Though it was disappointing that only 8 of the 93 parish graduates attended (approximately 40 people in total), the graduates there were appreciative of the recognition and the rosaries presented by the Knights of Columbus. The punch, cookies, and napkins were ordered and donated by Paula Ladage, so there was no cost to the parish for this reception, other than the coffee used.

The Community Life Committee is one that hopes to put a friendly face on St Joseph's to our many parishioners, both long- time and new members. Many thanks are due the Community Life Committee members for their generous sharing of their time, treasure, and talents! Though we are a large parish, we can get to know each other in the many social events that happen at St Joseph's, and thus we can learn to reach out to each other like family. And as you can see, one of the things our Committee facilitates is something that families do together----eat together! So all you cooks and social organizers step up and show us your talents!

Deanery Council By Bob Celichowski

A deanery is a group of neighboring parishes within the Archdiocese joined together to collaborate in Deanery Pastoral Council. The Deanery Pastoral Council forms with the Dean a leadership body to facilitate collaboration among the parishes within the deanery.

Deanery Pastoral Councils bridge the gap between parish and diocese, enabling Catholics to experience the Archdiocese as a community of faith, fulfilling the mission of Christ. Deanery Pastoral Councils also serve as a forum for reflecting on pastoral needs that are common to parishes in the Deanery. They will foster inter-parochial collaboration maintaining communication with the Parish Pastoral Councils and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. Deanery Pastoral Councils provide a structure that enables all members of the body of Christ, clergy, laity and religious to share their wisdom in the services of the Church.

Deanery Pastoral Council and the Parish Pastoral Councils

As a resource planning group the Deanery Pastoral Council provides opportunities for Parish Pastoral Councils to share learning experiences, resources and ideas. A Deanery Pastoral Council helps Parish Pastoral Councils develop a sense of Deanery identity. Ongoing communication and open dialogue between the Deanery Pastoral Council and the Parish Pastoral Councils strengthen the capacity for effective collaboration between and among parishes in the Deanery.

There are 12 Deaneries in all. St. Joseph Parish belongs to the Cedar Rapids Deanery. The others are Bellevue, Decorah, Dubuque, Dyersville, Elkader, Independence, Marshalltown, Mason City, New Hampton, Waterloo, and Webster City.

The Deanery meets four times per year and is hosted by one of the member churches. The meetings this year covered topics regarding disasters like Parkersburg, Cedar Rapids, and Postville, the shortage of priests in the future, immigration, and the Parish Pastoral Council norms and guidelines.

Immigration/Postville updates:

Things are not nearly back to normal. The web site <http://postvillestbridget.org> provides information and the opportunity to provide financial support. Diocese has hired a person to oversee disaster planning.

Future Plans

The years of 2009 and 2010 will be a time of transition in service and orientation. A timetable for implementation of these new Parish Pastoral Council norms and guidelines will be developed and announced by September of 2009. Some of the new committees entail significant changes and will require special attention.

In particular, the Faith Formation Commission and Catholic School Board of Education (where applicable) will need to be carefully aligned with the reorganization of the Archdiocesan Board of Education that is underway and will be completed by July 1, 2010.

**Social Concerns Committee
by Steve Determan**

The Social Concerns Committee is the organ of the council through which the parish participates in the servant ministry of Jesus Christ. It coordinates and promotes programs which respond to the social problems of today, giving special care to the poor, the lonely, the aged, the oppressed and minority groups. (From the Social Concerns Mission Statement.)

The Social Concerns committee meets the second Thursday of the month. During the 2008-2009 year, the chair of the committee was Bob Sowadski, and Father Rodney Allers was facilitator. In addition to discussion and planning, the committee supports the following interests:

Oaxaca Mission

We continue to provide on-going physical and financial support for La Estancia Fraternidad, a mission project in Oaxaca, Mexico. This mission can be compared to a Ronald McDonald type of structure St. Joseph's helped to build in 1989.

Now under the new direction of the founder's son, communications are difficult. However reports confirm La Estancia is still doing very well and witnessing increased numbers in persons served. New financial support will most likely go towards assisting them in upgrading an obsolete food refrigeration system.

Bob Buckley also maintains a relationship with the religious sisters who serve the people of Oaxaca. He has learned the sisters are being withdrawn from Oaxaca due to retirement & health related issues and will most likely not be replaced due to dwindling numbers. As they leave, we are phasing out our financial support until further notice.

Bob is tentatively planning a visit to Oaxaca later this summer.

Senior Living

In August of 2008, Trinity Pointe, the third senior living facility built by the Marion Churches Senior Living Community Foundation was opened. This facility joined the existing Moundview Manor and Scott Meadows completed in 2000 and 2004 respectively. With these 40 additional units on the Marion Churches campus, there are now 112 apartments and 118 residents. Through extensive landscaping and sidewalks between the buildings the residents can easily move about the campus and enjoy the community gazebo. This project has been supported by donations from the 12 participating churches, business community, private foundations, individuals and service organizations. St Joseph continues to offer support through donations and grants. Katie Lammers is the representative from St. Joseph on the Foundation board.

The focus for the next year will be twofold: In order to fulfill the mission of providing affordable housing for low income seniors, the Foundation will subsidize the rents of current residents at Scott Meadows, the only non HUD facility on campus, due to rising operational costs. The second goal will be to pay down the current commercial loan debt associated with Scott Meadows.

Helping Hand

Helping Hand is a local service organization that facilitates the distribution of funds in emergency situations for persons in need. Linda Humbert is the Social Concerns representative to this organization. Helping Hand has now opened satellite offices at Crossroads Mission in southwest Cedar Rapids and Living Waters Methodist Church in Marion to better meet the needs of the larger area.

Catholic Worker House

The Catholic Worker House provides shelter and meals for those in need. Saint Joseph Parish continues to provide financial support through an annual grant and continues to work with the Knights of Columbus to facilitate work teams who provide semiannual maintenance at the house.

With the departure of Catholic Worker House manager David Van Marm, the first order of business in 2010 will be to find a replacement manager to manage the day to day activities at the house. Bob Sowadski is our Representative to the group.

Habitat for Humanity

Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity completed a new home in 2008. Donna Stratton is the Social Concerns representative to Habitat and kept us apprised of progress during the time of construction and helped with fund-raising efforts. The dedication service was held at the time of the open house, January 27, 2008, when the home was near completion. A family has now moved into their new home. Many parishioners from St. Joseph Church worked on this project. During the summer of 2009 multiple new Habitat for Humanity homes are being constructed in Cedar Rapids. Saint Joseph parish is supporting this effort through bulletin announcements requesting meals and laborers.

Cedar Rapids Flood Relief

In response to the flood of Cedar Rapids in June of 2008, Saint Joseph parish has joined the other parishes in the area working with Catholic Charities to provide over 33,000 hours of volunteer labor. Saint Joseph has provided welcome baskets to flood victim moving to temporary housing in Marion, meals to volunteers, as well as helped gut and rebuild homes in the affected areas. With approximately

one half of the five thousand affected homes rebuilt, this effort is expected to continue through 2010. Steve Determan is the Social Concerns coordinator for this effort.

Respect Life

Deb Laue, Ray Franklin and Betti Anton are representatives for Respect Life and keep the group informed of various activities in the area that promote this cause. During the past year, a Pack and Play project was held to collect donations of infant clothing and formula in a play pen at the back of the church. The play pen was filled and donations were sent to Birthright and Aid to Women. Some of the Social Concerns members have joined other pro-life groups in praying the rosary at Planned Parenthood on Saturday mornings.

Grant Applications

22 Grant applications were issued this year with 20 returned. (See attached list.) Funding is provided each year through the percentage of the weekly offering given by St. Joseph parishioners. The grant applications are issued by Nancy Rowe and Bob Buckley and reviewed by the committee.

2009 Grants - Organization	2009 Request	2009 Allocations	2009 % of Remaining Budget
FOCA - Freedom of Choice Opposition	\$ 715.23	\$ 700.00	N/A
La Estancia Fraternidad - Oaxaca	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	N/A
Parish Relief Fund Reimbursement	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	N/A
Senior Living Fund.	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	N/A
Total fixed Dollar Allocations		\$ 15,700.00	
2008-2009 Adult Budget	\$1,138,025.40	4.10%	\$46,659.04
social concerns \$ less fixed allocations:			\$30,959.04
Aid to Women	\$ 1,620.00	\$ 1,532.47	4.95%
Birthright	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,349.79	7.59%
Camp Courageous	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,021.65	3.30%
Catherine McAuley	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,455.05	7.93%
Catholic Worker House	\$ 1,050.00	\$ 1,021.65	3.30%
Center for Renewal - Relief House in Ghana - Sharon Scully	\$ 1,491.00	\$ 1,021.65	3.30%
Churches of Marion Food Pantry	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,554.12	8.25%
Community Heath Free Clinic	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,554.12	8.25%
Helping Hands Ministry	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,349.79	7.59%
Horizons Family Service	\$ 1,780.00	\$ 1,225.98	3.96%
Linn Area Right to Life	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,225.98	3.96%
Marion Elderly Housing (Hiltop Manor)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,554.12	8.25%
Mission of Hope	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,225.98	3.96%
Nigeria Mission - Sr. Mary Julia Kepros	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,225.98	3.96%
Safeplace	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 1,532.47	4.95%
Salvation Army	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,430.31	4.62%
Waypoint	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,043.30	6.60%
Willis Dady Emergency Shelter	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,634.64	5.28%
Total	\$ 41,541.00	\$ 30,959.04	100.00%

Consideration is given to suggestions for new grant recipients as needed. In addition to the above, Social Concerns holds two soup suppers during Advent and Lent, featuring a guest speaker from one of the organizations that the parish supports. There is no charge for the suppers, but a free will offering is accepted and donated to the speaker for the organization he or she represents.

The goals of the group this year were to increase membership, increase parish funding, and communicate to the parish the mission of Social Concerns. Parish Council voted to increase the percentage of the offering given for Social Concerns grants from 3.8% to 4.1% with an ultimate goal of 5%. Plans are underway to publish in the bulletin, information about organizations supported by the parish through the Social Concerns grants.

**Board of Education Introduction
by Rick McAllister**

The Board of Education is made up of six elected Parishioners, each serving a three year term. These elected members also serve on other Parish committees. Below is a list of the Board members that served the Parish last year, along with their committee assignments:

Rick McAllister – President, Parish Council, Doug Boe – Vice President , Finance and Administration, Sara Sodawasser – Secretary, Xavier Board, Sean Rice – Financial Development, Public Relations, Doug Brock – SIAC, Ken Bauer - Chargers (school parent organization)

At the June 2009 Board meeting, we welcomed two new Board members to replace Sean Rice and Rick McAllister as their terms came to an end. The new Board members are Sheila Lara and Tom Coppa. The committee assignments for 2009-2010 are: Doug Brock – President, Parish Council, Doug Boe – Vice President, Finance and Administration, Sara Sodawasser – Secretary, Xavier Board, Ken Bauer – Financial Development, Chargers (school parent organization), Sheila Lara – Public Relations, Tom Coppa – SIAC.

The Board of Education is responsible for the youth educational programs for the Parish. The Board meets the second Tuesday of every month in the school library at 5pm. Fr. John is also a voting member of the Board and Tony Voss (School Principal), Ruth Ard (Director of Religious Education), and a teacher representative are also present at the meetings. For 2008-2009, Margene Cepowski was the teacher representative and for 2009-2010, Leslie Baumann will be the teacher representative. Following are reports from the school, religious education program, and Xavier High School.

**St. Joseph Catholic School
by Anthony Voss, Principal**

Curriculum

We have made several considerable changes to the curriculum this year with the replacement of the religion/human sexuality curriculum and the addition of a World History survey course in the middle school. This course will cycle every other year with a course on American History from Reconstruction through Current Events. Also this year we will be looking at the replacement of our social studies curriculum from K-5 and begin working on the implementation/alignment of the model core curriculum.

Playground Project

The playground project is almost complete. All that remains to be completed is the brick patio area, which will be completed this summer.

Enrollment for 2008-2009

K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
34	32	32	33	25	35	32	23	23	269

Project Enrollment for 2009-2010

K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
25	32	29	28	33	21	28	27	20	243

Professional Development

This year the teachers focused on developing cognitive structures in students and developing research based supplemental plans. These professional development classes were offered for credit this year, enabling the teachers to earn credit toward the recertification of their teaching license.

Iowa Core Curriculum

On April 25, 2008, the Iowa legislature approved mandating the Iowa Core Curriculum for all students in grades 9-12 by 2012 and grades K-8 by 2014. The Iowa Core Curriculum (also known as Model Core Curriculum) provides local school districts and nonpublic schools a guide to delivering instruction based on consistent, challenging and meaningful content to students. The curriculum identifies the essential concepts and skill sets for literacy, mathematics, science and social studies, as well as 21st century learning skills (civic literacy, financial literacy, technology literacy, health literacy, and employability skills). Governor Chet Culver signed the bill into law on May 1, 2008. This is a huge step forward in the state's ultimate goal of creating 'state standards'. School leaders endorsed this bill all across Iowa. Although the timeline seems a long way off, a lot of planning and preparation need to happen prior to the implementation of ICC.

Tuition Collection

This year the Board of Education adopted a much more stringent tuition collection policy. As a result of this work, we have seen much improvement in the collection of tuition. The Board has also adopted new and improved operating principles and a communication plan that has been well received.

Finance

While our budget for the 2009 academic year is healthy, it was necessary to make cuts in the FY10 budget. In total, these cuts were over \$110,000. Several positions were either eliminated or reduced due to a decline in enrollment that is largely being contributed to a weak economy.

Religious Education Program by Ruth Ard, Director of Religious Education

St. Joseph Parish has the largest religious education program in the Archdiocese of Dubuque. It thrives under two well-qualified, part-time, professional employees and dozens of faith-filled, generous volunteers.

Enrollment

There were 521 students enrolled in Religious Education (RE). This represents an increase over the previous year's enrollment.

Staff Change

Mary Hauschildt left the RE program July 1, 2008, after 25 years, 5 as secretary, then 20 years as Coordinator of Religious Education. Liz Lockhart, who had been Office Assistant for 2 years, stepped into the position of Coordinator of Religious Education. There is no Office Assistant, with those duties being carried out by the two staff persons, mainly by Liz with slightly more contract hours than she had in the past.

Catechists

Those honored for years of service at this year's Recognition Dinner were: **5 Years** – Jeanine Cruse, Kevin Gamble, Kristen Perreault, Theresa Vogel, Colette Webster-Moore; **10 years** – Michele Zahradnik; **15 Years** – Pam Jennings; **30 Years** – Nancy Rowe. Those who received certificates for Catechist Endorsement were: **Beginning Catechist** – Megan Gan, Marjorie Jensen, Esther Mossman, Elizabeth Sites, Becky Shanahan, JoAnn Starr. A special recognition was given to Mary Hajek as she leaves the program after 22.5 years as a catechist.

Change in High School Religious Education/Confirmation Preparation

Under the direction of Judy Ramsey, who had assumed the role of Confirmation Director in August, 2007, changes were made which united the high school RE program more closely with Confirmation preparation. The two programs remain in close collaboration, especially as regards curriculum and volunteers.

Sacrament Preparation Program

The RE staff is given the mandate to direct, on behalf of the parish, the Sacrament Preparation activities for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. These parish-based programs are to involve parents as well as students. A very comprehensive schedule of activities from September through April has been developed. Outstanding involvement by students from the public schools who are registered in RE, by homeschooled students, and by the second graders of St. Joseph School, as well as parents of all the children, makes this a very successful faith formation effort. This year 92 students participated.

Social Justice Outreach Projects

RE families respond very generously when given the opportunity to participate in Social Justice Outreach projects. Perhaps most noteworthy this year was the response to the Lenten outreach: "Give Drink to the Thirsty." Over \$900 worth of juice was donated to Churches of Marion Pantry, Catherine McAuley Center and Waypointe (*local*); over \$950 worth of baby formula was donated to the Yacqui Indian Reservation in Tucson, AZ (*national*); and \$2252.50 was donated to The H2O Project/Water for People (*international*). In addition, generous donations of needed goods were collected on three Wednesdays of Advent for various agencies in Cedar Rapids. Individual grade levels carried out other giving projects.

Special Donations to St. Joseph Religious Education

This year the RE program received two special monetary donations. One was given by the children of Jim & Sheila Seigel, in honor of their parents' 50th wedding anniversary. It was to be used for "something lasting." The money was designated for a new computer, and for the teacher manuals and supplemental materials of our new textbook series. The other was obtained by volunteer, Mary Lukefahr, through Verizon Volunteer Program. Under this program Verizon will make a donation of \$750 to a non-profit nominated by one of its employees. The employee must volunteer at least 50 hours of service in a year, the service must be verified and appropriate forms must be filed.

Parish Support

With the change of Mary Hauschildt to Parish Pastoral Minister, the Religious Education program operated with a net decrease of about 1/5 less staff hours. However, the level of parish support, both financial and in volunteer service remained very high. The collaboration and co-operation with Confirmation and Youth Ministry enhances our program. The ease with which we work together as staff and volunteers to make optimum use of the church, church hall, and office-building meeting space shows a genuine effort to be good stewards of the resources St. Joseph parishioners provide. The parish support in the form of subsidy to RE out of general income, nearly \$68,000 per year, offers considerable financial support. Parish funds from the Building and Grounds budget and from Endowment income which go to upkeep of the St. Joseph Education Center provide an office for RE staff and for volunteers' materials, as well as a much-needed storage area and quality space for our classroom-based program.

Xavier High School
by Tom Keating, Principal

Enrollment

Enrollment for the 2008-09 year was certified at 758 students. St. Joseph students totaled 61. In the past three years an average of 68% of St. Joseph's 8th graders have enrolled at Xavier. For the 2009-10 upcoming school year, 44% have enrolled. Thank you for the continued support from St. Joseph's parish for Xavier High School!

Summary Report

Xavier High School provides students with an environment that stresses the presence and love of God. Students at Xavier High School enjoy many opportunities to explore, deepen, share and live their faith. We begin and end each day with prayer led by a faculty member. Individual classes throughout the day also begin with prayer. Mass is offered throughout each quarter and parish priests are invited to celebrate those Masses. These Masses are usually arranged by individual classes. The entire Xavier High School community worships at all-school Mass once per month. Prayer services and communal reconciliation help students prepare for the seasons of Advent and Lent. Students and staff have the opportunity to participate in Eucharistic Adoration and our Day of the Rosary. Our Theology classes provide a solid foundation of Catholic knowledge and an opportunity to explore what it means to be Catholic in today's world. All of our students explore faith issues through class retreats and many participate in Spiritual Teams, TEC opportunities and Wellspring (one on one faith discussions with faculty) to further deepen their faith experience. This year we added Kairos, a retreat opportunity for our juniors. All of our students live their faith through service work in the community and many reach out to the larger world community through participation in mission trips. While we are proud of our efforts to guide students in the spiritual development, we continue to look for opportunities in the area of spiritual life through retreats, service and parish involvement.