



CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY OF LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY AND
HAMPDEN SYDNEY COLLEGE



Some might consider St. Theresa Parish in Farmville as a launching pad for future priests because a number of Richmond diocesan clergy worshipped there when they were students at nearby Hampden-Sydney College.

Both Father Joseph Metzger III, pastor of Blessed Sacrament in Norfolk, and Father Michael Boehling, Vicar for Vocations, had been involved in Catholic Campus Ministry at the private all-male institution.

Father Neal Nichols, with the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter and now pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Chesapeake, had likewise graduated from Hampden-Sydney.

Father John David Ramsey, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Newport News, had been a faculty member there before entering priestly formation. He was ordained to the diaconate at St. Theresa's July 18, 2009.

In addition, diocesan seminarian Cassidy Stinson attended Mass at St. Theresa's during his teen years and says his participation in the youth group was influential in his later discernment of a priestly vocation.

Such a track record for priests is somewhat unusual for a parish of approximately 250 households.

Perhaps a more recent distinction for St. Theresa Parish is that both its pastor and parochial vicar are from other countries and are "on loan" to the Diocese of Richmond from their respective dioceses.

Father Stefan Migac, pastor, is originally from Slovakia and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Kosyce in 2014. He had completed his priestly formation with the Dio-

Father Stefan Migac, Pastor, on the sloping grounds of St. Theresa's



cese of Richmond and is on loan to the Diocese for a period of five years.

Father Paul Kkonde, the parochial vicar from Uganda, was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Mityana July 25, 1998.

Both priests live in Farmville but also serve two other parishes of the Central Virginia Parish Cluster – Immaculate Heart of Mary in Blackstone and Sacred Heart in Meherrin. They alternate their parish Mass sites each Sunday allowing people at all three parishes to know both men equally.

"It's a great experience and we serve a variety of people here, including Catholic campus ministry at Hampden-Sydney College and Longwood University," Father Migac said.

A few parishioners can share unusual stories which unexpectedly brought them to St. Theresa's where they have been active ever since the initial visit.

One of them is Carol Beattie who began her job as business manager of St. Theresa's July 1. She had moved from Southern Maryland to the small town of Victoria on Halloween of 2008 and began attending Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Blackstone. But her job was in Farmville.

"I was working on Christmas Eve in 2009 as an ultrasound tech at Centra Southside Medical Center in Farmville," Mrs. Beattie said.

"I remember saying 'I wish there was a midnight Mass somewhere nearby,'" she recalled.

"Then a fellow tech told me 'There's a Catholic church across the street.'

"I called my family at 11 and said 'meet me at the church.' I came back the next week and I have been here ever since."

She explained that she had never noticed the building of St. Theresa's because she always took a different route to her job at the hospital and entered the grounds through the back entrance.

Mrs. Beattie, originally from Utica, N.Y. where she attended Catholic schools, soon became an active parishioner.

"I was the hospitality chairperson for one year and outreach chair for a year," she said. "And after that I volunteered in the parish office for a couple of years."

The position of church secretary was restructured to combine the role of bookkeeper and secretary and Mrs. Beattie was hired.

Karel Bailey, director of religious education at St. Theresa's, also began her work as a volunteer "when my son was 6 and he turns 40 in November."

She had spoken to Father Robert McEleney, who was then pastor of St. Theresa's, about asking to help in one of the classes after moving with her family from Michigan.

"He right away said 'what grade do you want to teach?'" Mrs. Bailey said.

She responded that she would like to teach the third grade class.

"I just worked my way up the ranks into the DRE position," she continued.

"I'll stay on as long as I'm able.

"St. Theresa's is one of the reasons we never went back to Michigan," she said. "Being that we didn't have any family here, St. Theresa Parish became our family."

St. Theresa's Farmville:



Father Stefan Migac with Deacon Emmett McLane

"It's a great experience and we serve a variety of people here, including Catholic campus ministry at Hampden-Sydney College and Longwood University."

— FATHER STEFAN MIGAC
PASTOR OF ST. THERESA'S

In the 37 years Mrs. Bailey has been active at St. Theresa's she has worked with 13 priests who were either pastor or parochial vicar.

Currently there are between 50 to 60 students in the grades k-12 classes which are held in the parish hall, a separate building across from the church. The teachers are all volunteers.

"I have never had to beg for teachers," Mrs. Bailey said. "Father McEleney early on told me 'Have faith, pray and they will come.'"

She smiles as she remembers the various priests who have served at St. Theresa's.

"They've all come with their own personality and they brought with them what the parish needed at that time," she said.

"We didn't always recognize it immediately when they arrived. But you had to feel that God's hand is in all of this."

In addition to the current two priests, St. Theresa's two permanent deacons, Emmett McLane, a retired dentist, and Peter Menting, a retired business executive, play an important part in parish ministry. Both deacons rotate in giving the Sunday homily once a month.

This past spring Deacon McLane and his wife, Robin, initiated a youth group for 5th through 8th grade students which meets once a month.

"There had not been any youth activities in a long time," Deacon McLane said, adding that activities have included a pizza party, bowling and visit to a nursing home in an effort "to mix up service activities with fun activities."

Deacon candidate Tim Greer from St. Theresa's leads the adult faith formation group which is currently reading the book "Living the Mass" by Dominic Grassi.

Deacon Menting and Deacon McLane also help guide engaged couples through a diocesan program called FOCUS in which both the man and woman answer questions apart from each other.

"We sit down with the couple and show them the variations in their answers," Deacon Menting explained.

"The end result is that they leave with more confidence in their knowledge of each other," he added.

Ordained to the diaconate for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y. in 1986, Deacon Menting and his wife, Diane, came to Farmville 10 years ago.

He regularly visits the Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation in Crewe where he leads a Bible study once a month and accompanies one of the priests for Mass once a month.

St. Theresa's food pantry is housed in a separate building behind the parish hall. It is open every Wednesday morning and serves between 70 and 90 families a month.

"We are the only food pantry which offers food twice a month," Father Migac said.

Horst and Martha Kaiser, parishioners who managed the food pantry for 20 years, are soon moving to Florida. Margie Durbin, active in the that ministry for 14 years, became director July 1.

"What makes our food pantry different is that we treat

each person who comes here with respect and let them select which items they want from each station," Mrs. Durbin said. "We don't just see them walk in, hand them a pre-packed bag of food and then watch them go out the door."

The food pantry volunteers are group of six who have a variety of duties which include traveling to Feedmore, a food bank in Richmond, where they get supplies.

Since close to 75 percent of the patrons are elderly, one of the men volunteers carries the food items to their car. Often it is Deacon McLane who does the task.

With Longwood University located in walking distance from St. Theresa's, Catholic Campus Ministry students go to St. Theresa's for Sunday Mass.

"Catholic Campus Ministry is a ministry of the parish," Father Migac said, adding that Dana Scarantino is campus minister for both schools. One of the priests celebrates Mass at Hampden-Sydney the last Wednesday of the month.

In addition to Sunday Mass at 8 and 10:30 a.m. (Saturday vigil at 5:30 p.m.), Mass is celebrated on Tuesday and Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., and on Thursday and Friday at 9 a.m.

There is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesday after the 5:30 p.m. Mass.

"My wife and I started attending Mass at St. Theresa's when we moved to Farmville in August of 2011," said Tom Wears, a member of the parish council.

"At that time we had just one son, Owen, and the parish community was very warm and welcoming.

"They helped make Farmville feel something like home," he added.

While there are plenty of young families with children, there are also many seniors who have long been members of St. Theresa's.

"We moved here in 1959 from Northern Virginia," said Lois Gager. "My husband (John) worked for Virginia Power and we've been in the same house ever since."

Mr. Gager, now 88, remembers mowing the grass on the hilly grounds of St. Theresa's with an 18-inch push mower for at least 10 years.

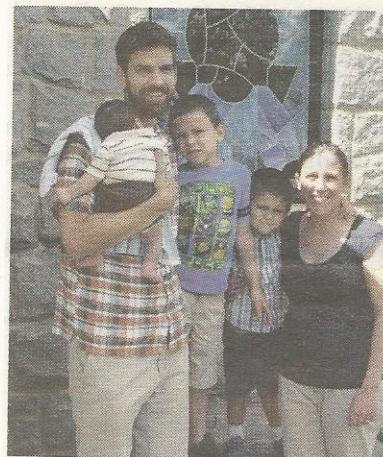
"A few of us took turns each week," he said. "Now the work is done by a contractor."

The parish takes great pride in the garden which visitors to the church pass on their way to the entrance. The colorful garden is the work of Nan Colvin.

Father Migac is grateful to parishioners for the warm welcome he received in his first assignment as pastor, only one year after ordination. He had previously been parochial vicar at St. Bridget's, Richmond.

"I'm learning many new things," he said. "It's a challenge at the same time but I feel part of the family here.

"The parishioners really care about their priests, me and Father Paul."

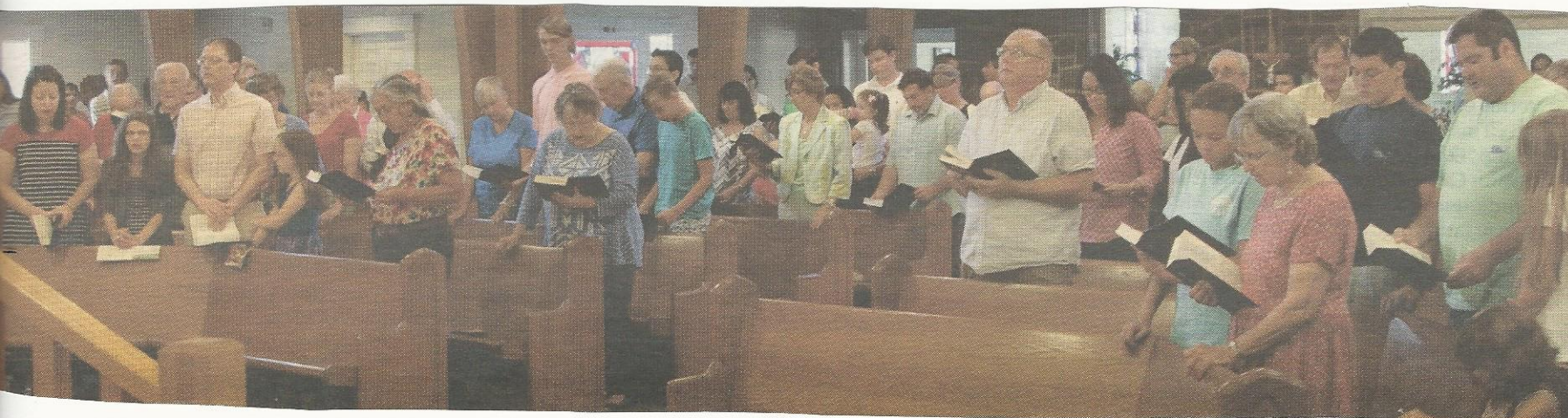


above
Tom and Shelby Wears and their three boys, Keegan, 3; Owen, 6 and Camden, then only four weeks, outside the church. Tom is a member of St. Theresa's parish council.

middle top
Philip Fenaux, sacristan, with Fred Richard, lending assistance.



Doreen Hines is known as "the Popcorn lady" at the parish annual picnic held in a park adjacent to the church grounds.



Youth aid homes in disrepair

FRIDAY, JULY 21, 2017

BY MORGAN WHITE
The Farmville Herald

Several homes recently had vibrance restored thanks to a youth mission group that included participants from St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, of Farmville.

The wood on the back porch had rotted out, and there were six-inch holes in the floor. The front porch had also been in disarray.

"The back porch wasn't no good," said James Lee, the house's resident.

He said people would come over and see that the railings on the deck off the back of his house were weak and the boards were rotting out.

"I had other boards over top of them, trying to make it safe enough for people to come in and out of, and the one off the back was really impassable to get up on with the floor, and then the roof with a big hole in it," Lee said. "I could get out of it, but I wouldn't recommend it for anybody because I know where to step ..."

He said the house originally belonged to his father, who passed away within the past few years.

"I got four siblings, but everybody got their own place they live in, so I'm the only one that volunteered...and try to, you know, keep the place halfway going," Lee said.

Between July 12-18, Lee's house was one of six projects completed by a youth missions group of 95 people, 65 of which were part of churches' youth groups, from the churches of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, of Farmville, St. Olaf Catholic Church, of Williamsburg, and Church of the Incarnation, of Charlottesville.



Seven members of the youth group from St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, in Farmville, were part of 95 members of a mission group that helped repair houses in Prince Edward County. Pictured are, from left, front row, Anna Stinson, Naomi Jones; back row, Christian Pope, Trent Pettus, Brennan Stone, Margaret Walters and Zach Bettis.

According to Ann Mattio, St. Olaf Catholic Church's youth minister and the organizer of the mission, this was the seventh year the mission had come to the Farmville area. Mattio said over the seven years of the mission, led by St. Olaf Catholic Church, participants have worked on restoring 77 different houses.

"It's all of it," Mattio said during the mission regarding the scope of the work involved. "... There's houses that hadn't had water in 10 years, and we just brought water to her yesterday — brought it from the well to the house."

Mattio said that while teenagers get a bad rap, being seen as lazy or self-centered, the kids at the site, who gave up a week of their summer, were working outside in the 90 degree and above weather all day.

Seven members of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, of Farmville, were part of the 65 other youth group members. They included Anna Stinson, Naomi Jones, Christian Pope, Trent Pettus, Brennan Stone, Margaret Walters and Zach Bettis.

"I think it's really important that we're doing this stuff. I mean, Mr. Lee needs help with



MORGAN WHITE | HERALD

James Lee was one of the people who benefited from house improvements done by youth mission groups. Pictured are, from left, Lee, Ann Mattio, of St. Olaf Catholic Church, and Robin and Emmett McLane, of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church.

his house, and it's good that the Catholic community sees it also, that it's unsafe that he's living here," said Trent Pettus, a youth member of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church and a rising junior at Randolph-Henry High School.

Pettus said as a local youth, it was surprising that there was this type of need in the community.

Lee said the youth members working on his front and back porches were good workers.

"Everything they're doing, I'm just as satisfied as I can be," Lee said.

Mattio said that the work wouldn't have been able to have been done without the help of The Fishin' Pig, Applebee's and the local YMCA, the latter of which allowed

members of the mission team to take showers in its locker rooms. Robin McLane, of St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, said the work wouldn't have been able to have been done without help from Johns Memorial Episcopal Church as well.



COLLECTING FOOD FOR THANKSGIVING DAY BASKETS





Horst Kaiser and his wife Martha offer a welcoming smile to those who visit the St. Theresa food pantry every Wednesday. A ministry of St. Theresa Catholic Church in Farmville, the food pantry operates on donations and is staffed by volunteers from the church. The pantry assists about 80 Prince Edward County residents every month. The Kaisers oversee the weekly distributions. (Photo by Marge Swayne.)

St. Theresa's Food Pantry Offers Community Outreach

By MARGE SWAYNE

For many in the Farmville community Thanksgiving is a time for feasting. To those standing in line at St. Theresa's food pantry for a bag of six to eight food items, it's more about giving thanks.

The food pantry, a ministry of St. Theresa Catholic Church in Farmville, has been open every Wednesday morning for the past 16 years to assist local residents in need of food. Horst Kaiser and his wife Martha manage the weekly distributions.

"Anyone who is in need can come," Mr. Kaiser stated. "The majority of the people who come by here are elderly people on Social Security — that's just not enough to live on."

St. Theresa's food pantry provides for about 80 people a month.

"We are about a dozen volunteers. We serve between 30 to 45 families," Kaiser continued. "We work with Social Services. Since our space and resources are limited we usually allow our visitors to come twice a month."

Those who do come obviously have a need to be there.

"There's one lady who has shown up twice a month for the last ten or twelve years," Kaiser said.

Proof of income is required and those who come must be residents of Prince Edward County.

"That's the only limitation we have,"

Kaiser stated.

Kaiser and his wife had arrived early on this distribution day to accept a delivery from the Food Bank in Richmond.

"We work with the Central Virginia Food Bank," Kaiser explained. "We pay them a fee, and they bring the food to us once a month. I have what I call a wish list, so I tell them what I would like to have."

The Food Bank authorizes the church to pick up some items directly from Food Lion.

"We go two to four times a week to pick up fresh produce and meat," Kaiser explained. "I guess the best part most people want is the meat."

On this Wednesday afternoon, the Kaisers had set up for next week's distribution.

"We have five items here, and bakery goods make six," Kaiser pointed to the counter neatly stacked with canned goods and cereal. "We give anywhere from six to eight items — sometimes we have more."

The food pantry, Kaiser explained, operates strictly on donations.

"Our Boy Scout troop is quite active," he noted. "They have a food drive once or twice a year."

Other donations come from church members.

"We have a basket at the church during the summer months and ask people to bring what they can," Kaiser said. "We have one lady who brings us all the off-size eggs she

has, and we get vegetables that people grow in their gardens."

"It's a parish project," stated Father Tony Morris, St. Theresa's pastor. "Different people take turns volunteering."

He also commented on the Kaisers dedication to the pantry.

"In the year and a half I've been here the Kaisers have been a regular fixture — they do a wonderful ministry," he noted.

Father Morris, like the Kaisers, sees what he believes is a reflection of the economy in food pantry patrons over the last year or so.

"When I go over there to help I've noticed that the age group is very diverse," Father Morris observed.

"We do have more younger people showing up," Kaiser added. "There are also more men now than there was a few years ago."

Church members who assist with the food pantry ministry believe it is an important and needed outreach.

"We do try to do what we can to help out in the community," Father Morris affirmed.

"I really feel that the majority of people appreciate what we're doing," Kaiser concluded.

Jesus, looking down from the wall behind boxes of canned good, appeared to be smiling.

At St. Theresa's food pantry no one has to ask the question — "what would Jesus do?"

They are already doing it.





1989 - New Stained Glass Windows





Christmas Celebrations

