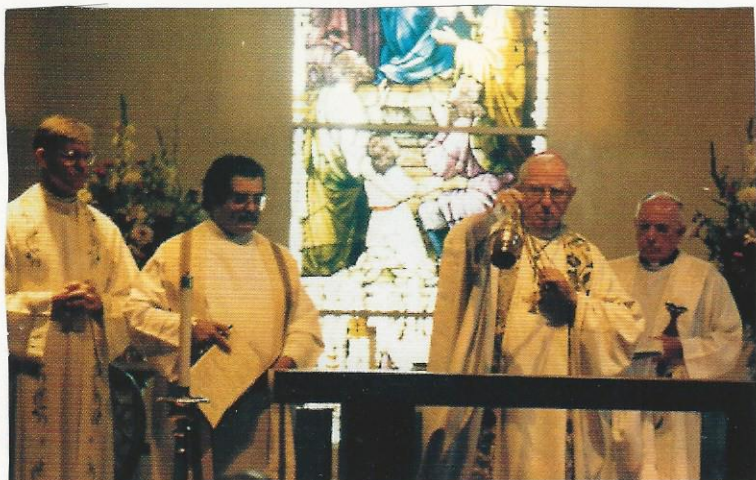




*Come celebrate with
your neighbors the
Liturgy of Dedication
of Saint Theresa
Roman Catholic
Church and the
Great Hall on
Saturday, June 13
at 5:30 p.m.*

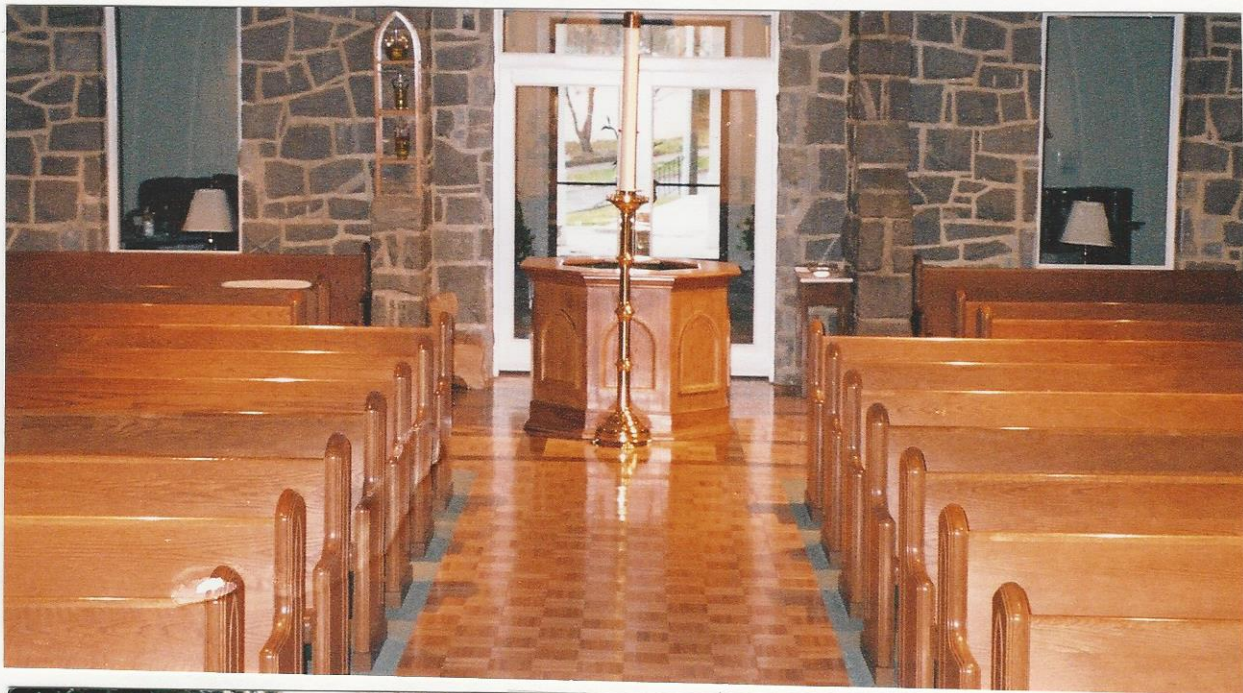


A Celebration



"Praise Him"
13 June 1998





'Having it shows the interconnectedness'

New Catholic sanctuary is graced with menorah

BY KATHRYN ORTH

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

FARMVILLE — The question is not why St. Theresa's Roman Catholic congregation wants a menorah, the traditional symbol of Judaism, says the Rev. Joe Metzger. The question is, why not?

"Having it shows the interconnectedness between the Jewish faith and the Catholic Christian faith, and how we work together in service to God," said Metzger, the church's pastor.

Representatives of the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond presented a seven-branch menorah to the St. Theresa congregation at the 10:30 a.m. Mass yesterday. The menorah, brought back from a recent family trip to Israel by Samuel and Harriet Lapkin, was a gift from the federation to the church.

Several months ago, with St. Theresa's un-

dergoing renovation and expansion, and the congregation thinking about furnishing its new building, Metzger mentioned to his mother, Marie-Louise Metzger of Richmond, that he would like a menorah for the church. Mrs. Metzger passed her son's wish on to her neighbors, Barbara and Ron Schocket. They in turn told Saul Viener, director of special projects for the federation, and Miriam Davidow, the federation's community services director, that St. Theresa's wanted a menorah from Israel.

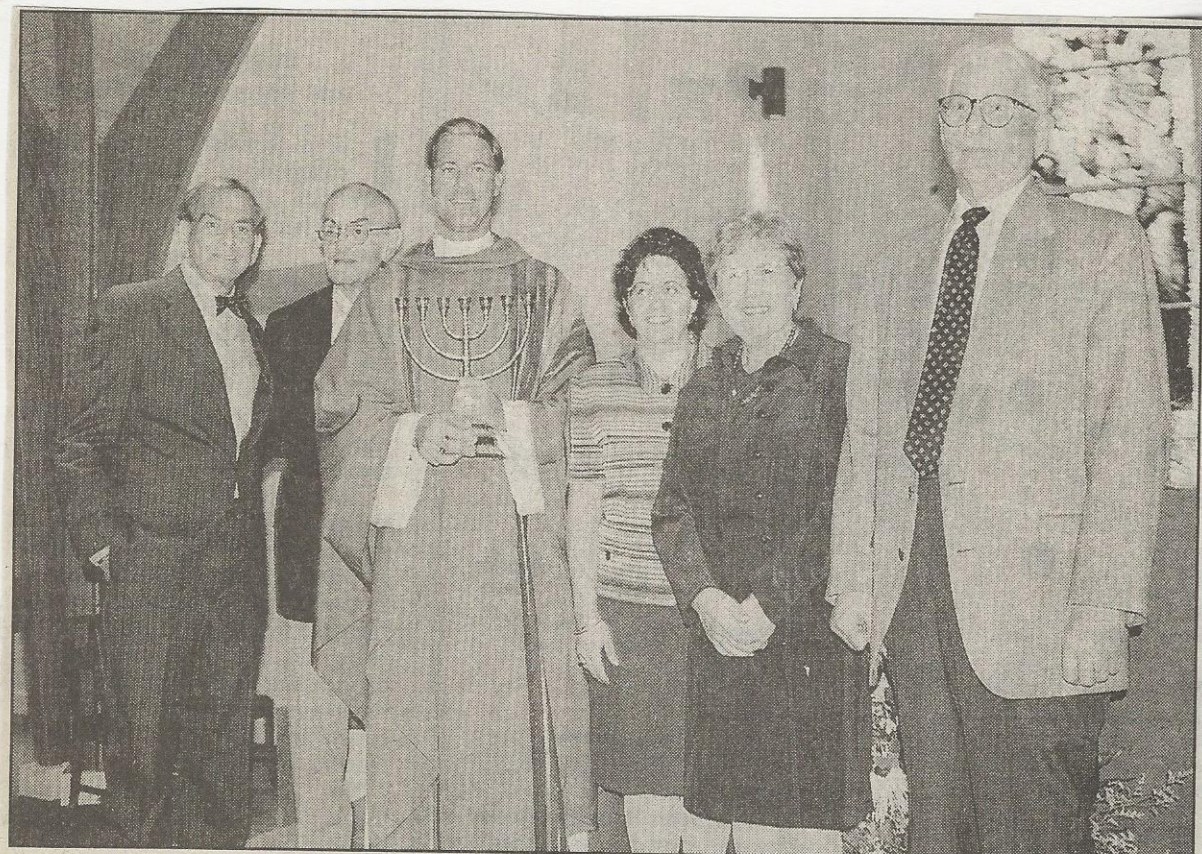
"Barbara indicated that a dynamic young

priest in Farmville was building a new sanctuary and would need a menorah," Davidow said in remarks to the St. Theresa's congregation during yesterday's Mass.

The Lapkins volunteered to find a menorah for St. Theresa's and bring it home with them from their trip in August, but the menorah did not prove easy to find.

"I shopped all over Jerusalem for it, but we were looking for a seven-branch menorah, not the eight-branch menorah that is used for Ha-

PLEASE SEE **MENORAH**, PAGE B4 ▶



KATHRYN ORTH

LINKED. Celebrating the presentation of the Menorah were (from left) Ronald Shocket, Saul Viener, the Rev. Joe Metzger, Miriam Davidow, Harriet Lapkin and Samuel Lapkin.

Menorah graces new sanctuary

▼ **MENORAH** FROM PAGE B1
nukkah and is easier to find," Harriet Lapkin said.

The Lapkins found the heavy brass seven-branch menorah at Yad Vashem, a memorial to the 6 million European Jews who died in the Holocaust. They wrapped it carefully and carried it with them in their luggage, knowing that Metzger wanted a menorah that had been hand-carried from Israel, Harriet Lapkin said.

The menorah is a copy of the sev-

en-branch menorah that was in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, Davidow told St. Theresa's parishioners. That menorah, fueled by olive oil, was kept burning at all times. The original menorah was taken to Rome after the Temple was destroyed and is depicted in the Arch of Titus near the Colosseum, she said.

St. Theresa's menorah will sit on a bracket behind the ambo, or pulpit, and not far from the altar of the new sanctuary, which also boasts a 111-year old stained glass window

from Austria; a copy of the San Damiano Crucifix, made by Franciscan monks in Assisi; and a hand-crafted baptismal font, made by parishioner Pete Aldi.

After the presentation of the menorah, Metzger offered a prayer and words of thanks to the Richmond visitors in Hebrew, and added, "[The menorah] is important, because it shows a great bond. It shows unity."

Said Saul Viener, "May it serve as an everlasting bond between our communities."





Parishioners Alice Johnson, left, and Barbara Herrmann amidst toys at St. Theresa, Farmville.



Farmville parish collects 40,000 toys for Kosovo refugee children

Pastor counts on pledged military plane for delivery

By STEVE NEILL

Of The Catholic Virginian

Father Joseph Metzger was ready to leave on a moment's notice for Macedonia last week to shepherd delivery of 40,000 toys collected by his parish for Kosovo children in a refugee camp.

Father Metzger, pastor of St. Theresa's parish in Farmville, told The Catholic Virginian that he hoped to be on a special plane to Skopje, Macedonia sometime in June after receiving a promise by telephone that a benefactor in Connecticut would secure a military plane to transport the toys stored in boxes in St. Theresa's Great Hall. He planned to stay at the camp four or five days.

Catholic Relief Services arranged to distribute the toys to children in refugee camps in Skopje. Father Metzger said CRS officials told him there are about 17,000 refugees in some 3,000 families at the camps in Skopje.

Recalling the origins of the toy drive, Father Metzger said he was particularly concerned about the plight of the refugees from Kosovo during Holy Week and wanted St. Theresa's parish to make some response.

"I was thinking and praying about it," he said. "I wanted to know what could we do in addition to praying."

On Easter Sunday he went to Richmond to have Easter dinner at his mother's house and was playing outside with his five nephews and two nieces as they waited for the dinner. The children grew restless.

"I remembered there was a ball in my mother's garage," Father Metzger said. "I got the ball and we played and an hour flew by before we had Easter dinner."

The priest immediately began formulating plans to collect toys for the refugee children and broke the effort down into four phases — one, to organize; two, to collect; three, to transport, and four, to distribute.

"I figured phases one, two and four would be the most difficult," Father Metzger said. "I thought phase three would be the easiest. Boy, was I wrong!"

"I got someone in the parish to write a press release and we faxed it to every school and parish in the diocese and every news agency in the United States."

Television stations in Richmond and Roanoke gave the toy collection effort coverage and people responded far more than St. Theresa's had imagined. The owners of MB Imports in Richmond offered part of their garage as a drop-off point for toys in addition to the Farmville church.

"When we started the drive, a reporter asked me, 'Father, how many toys would you like to get?' and asked me to pick a number," Father Metzger said. "I made up a number of 5,000 toys thinking I was reaching for the sky. . . Well, well, well, I'm wrong again."

The priest began contacting international organizations to ask their support in distributing any toys the parish would collect. "They all said, 'We do not do toys.'" the priest said.

He spoke several times to CRS officials in Albania who welcomed the idea, saying that no other program or agency

Parish readies toys

■ TOYS, from Page 1
was distributing toys.

St. Theresa parishioners spent most of every day removing labels from each toy or doll and then putting them in large moving van boxes and labeling each box. Toys included stuffed animals of all sizes, dolls, trucks, plastic baseball bats, jump ropes, hula hoops and a variety of games. The only stipulation was that toys not require batteries.

In addition to St. Theresa's, other parishes which helped include Sacred Heart, Prince George County; St. Catherine's, Clarksville; St. Francis of Assisi, Staunton; St. Ann's, Colonial Heights, and St. Andrew's and Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke. Catholic schools which sent toys included Roanoke Catholic, Benedictine, Richmond; and Blessed Sacrament-Huguenot Academy, Powhatan.

The uncertainty of the departure date and point were unsettling to Father Metzger who admitted the effort was much more than he anticipated. It took a toll on his nerves and he said he couldn't sleep well at night. He made arrangements for Father Robert McEleney, a retired priest of the diocese living in Appomattox, to celebrate Mass in his absence.

"We're ready," Father Metzger said. "We've boxed up the toys and our great hall is filled from floor to ceiling with boxes of toys. And we've got two 18-wheeler trucks to take the toys from St. Theresa's to their airport."



Toys Shipped Off To Kosovo

St. Theresa Catholic Church was the site Saturday of a massive movement of toys, which had been locally donated and

collected at the church in Farmville and were loaded up for shipping to children in war torn Kosovo. (Photo by Bid Wall)



Father Metzger To Leave Farmville

By MARGE SWAYNE

Father Joseph Metzger, of St. Theresa Catholic Church, is leaving Farmville this week to assume the duties of pastor at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Norfolk.

Assigned to St. Theresa's since June of 1995, Fr. Metzger has worked on many church-related and community projects. His first year here, he established a prison ministry at the Buckingham Correctional Center, the Dillwyn Correctional Center, and the Piedmont Regional Jail. He was also pastor of the Nativity Catholic Church in Buckingham at that time.

In September of 1997, St. Theresa's began a major building project. They renovated the old church building as a great hall and office space and built a new church adjacent to it. That project was completed in June of 1998.

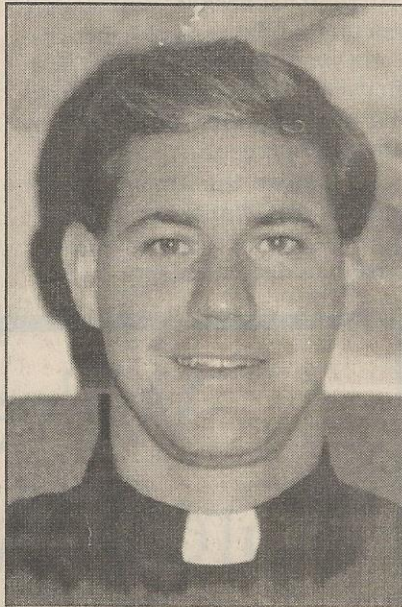
"In the middle of that we established a food pantry," Fr. Metzger added. Food is distributed there once a week.

Most recently, in the spring of this year, Fr. Metzger spearheaded a toy drive for the children of Kosovo. Toys continued to fill the church's great hall all summer until a total of over 40,000 were collected. In August, Fr. Metzger traveled to Kosovo to help distribute them.

A 1984 graduate of Hampden-Sydney College, Fr. Metzger worked in politics, then went to Rome to attend the Pontifical Gregorian University where he received a degree in sacred theology. He served one pastoral year in Petersburg before returning to Rome where he received a license degree from the same university. He was ordained a deacon in St. Peter's Basilica, and in 1991 was ordained a priest in the cathedral in Richmond.

Although ready to serve his new church, Fr. Metzger is reluctant to leave Farmville.

"The Farmville community is



FR. JOSEPH METZGER

the state's best kept secret," he stated. "Events here are so rich and growing; what we all do together here is amazing."

He reminded his congregation Sunday of the church cornerstone — in Latin — which translated means, "To the greater glory of God."

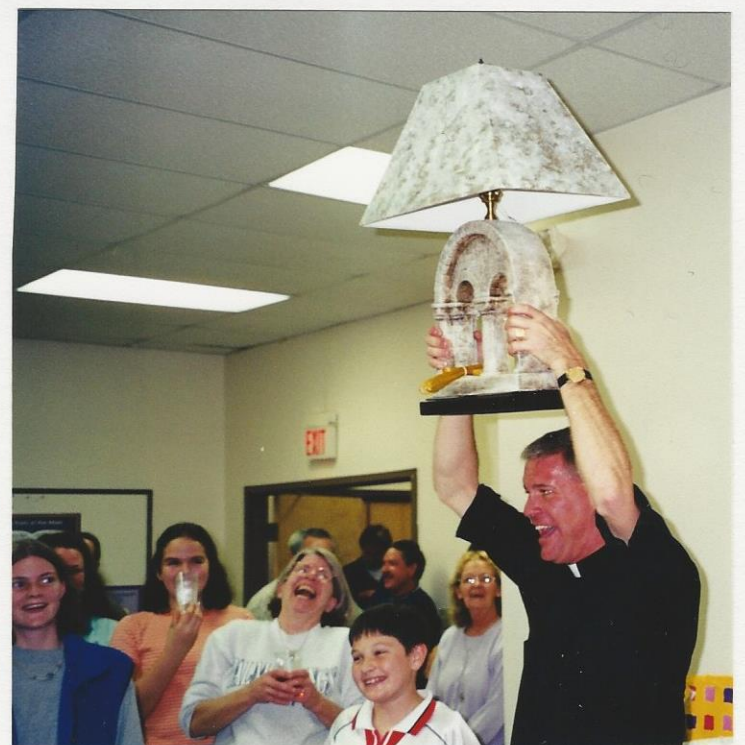
"No matter who sits in this chair," he told the church. "Remember the cornerstone and what it says."

A retired priest, Father Robert McEleney will serve St. Theresa's until next May.

A fellow clergyman, the Rev. Joe McCutchen, of Farmville Presbyterian Church, commented on Fr. Metzger's departure in his church's October newsletter.

"The mercurial Father Joseph Metzger is being sent to take over a distressed parish in Norfolk," Rev. McCutchen wrote. "This will probably be the greatest loss of energy Farmville has suffered since Virginia Power closed its office here."

All in the community who have worked with Father Joe would have to add: "Amen."



FATHER RICHARD MOONEY

2000 - 2002

After graduating from Virginia Tech in 1974 Father Mooney went to St. Mary's Seminary and University, where he obtained a STM degree. He was ordained a Deacon at St. Bede's Church, Williamsburg in 1978, and served there until his ordination to the Priesthood in Richmond in May of 1979. Father Mooney served as Associate Pastor at Ascension Parish in Virginia Beach from 1979 to 1982. He was then assigned Pastor of the Church of the Holy Family in Virginia Beach from 1991 until 2000. From 2000 to 2002 Fr. Mooney served as Pastor to St. Theresa's parish in Farmville, Virginia. Since 2008 Fr. Mooney has served as Pastor of St. Thomas More in Lynchburg, Virginia.

