



The Good Shepherd

Donated By Dr. John A. And Mrs. Frances J. (Basler) Merideth

John Andrew Merideth was born on May 18, 1901, in Bloomfield, Iowa, one of seven brothers. He joined the U.S. Army and entered medical school, emerging with a love of surgery and caring for patients. While serving his residency at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, John met Cobden native Frances J. Basler, who was finishing her training as a Registered Nurse through St. Mary's Hospital. They later married and had two sons, Richard A. (Dick) and John S. (Jack).

The Merideth family moved frequently, since Dr. John was assigned by the Army to train medics and to serve as a surgeon in the field during World

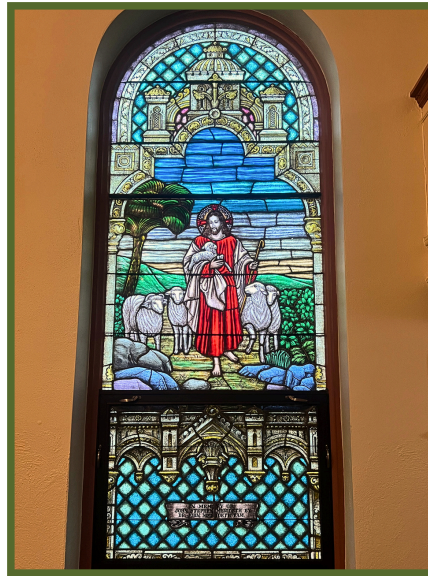
War II. He is credited with facilitating the first open heart massage in the field, which ultimately saved the life of a soldier.

Dr. John later retired in Cobden, where he became the area's family physician. He and Frances shared a love of medicine. Dr. John regularly and willingly accepted a chicken, vegetables or baked goods for providing

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Richard (Dick) and John (Jack) Merideth.



Stained glass window of The Good Shepherd
~Donated in memory of John Stephen Merideth.

Father's corner:

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

Today we will focus on the image of the Good Shepherd. It is very familiar to each of us.

I invite you today to look at the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, in the window of our church and imagine that you are in Jesus' arms. He is taking care of you, listening to you, and knowing you. But He also speaks to you and reminds you that He loves you so much that He is capable of giving His life for you.

Just stop and contemplate the image and take to heart this reflection. It reminds you how wonderful Jesus is to you and that you can trust Him because He will never let you down. You are important to Him. He knows everything about you and is ready to listen to you whenever you want to talk to Him, and He will have the best answer for you.

The image of the Good Shepherd represents Jesus Christ as the shepherd who cares for and protects his flock, a figure found since early Christianity. It is based on the Gospel parable and on the texts of the Old Testament (Isaiah, Ezekiel) where God presents himself as the shepherd of Israel. This representation usually shows Jesus carrying a sheep on his shoulders, symbolizing the search for and salvation of the soul that has been lost or strayed.

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Priests of the past

Rev. Robert J. Keating 1970–1971

Father Robert Keating became administrator of St. Joseph Parish when Father Drone became ill. Father Keating served as Administrator for one year. During his term Liturgical changes continued and the Parish Council was reorganized.



Father Robert Keating

St. Thérèse of Liseux (CONTINUED)

his medical care those who needed it. Dr. John was passionate about medicine – he loved house calls, seeing patients in his office or doing minor surgeries for area residents.

While living in the Cobden area, Dr. John and Frances invested in cattle and built a notable herd with award-winning bulls. They also enjoyed farming on their acreage and participating in the life of the parish.

In 1954, the Merediths' son, Jack, passed away unexpectedly. In their time of grief, the Merediths chose to honor their son in a special way with the stained-glass window depicting the Good Shepherd, noting a Christian's everlasting life and being called to Heaven to share in the glory of God.

Dr. John Merideth passed away at the age of 55 in his beloved community of Cobden. Frances passed away in 1999 at the age of 93 while living near her granddaughter in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Information provided by Lorrie (Meredith) Erusha, granddaughter of John and Frances Meredith and shared by Debbie Russell



Dr. John Merideth



Francis Merideth (Basler)

Parish Pearls**Early Days of St. Joseph Parish**

St. Joseph Parish was formally organized and a church was built in 1879. A few rooms were built onto the original church to accommodate the Benedictine Father who would visit Cobden and the surrounding area from the monastery in nearby Wetaug.

In 1893, the church in Anna was destroyed by fire. Father Alto Herr transferred his residence to Cobden and purchased a small, three-room house adjacent to the church property. This lot is where the rectory now stands.

Also in 1893, two parcels of land were donated by Anna Petsch and Joseph Bigler for a cemetery.

Father's corner (CONTINUED) Symbolism of the Image

- Christ as the Good Shepherd: Represents Jesus as the guide, protector, and savior of humanity.
- The sheep on the shoulders: Symbolizes the search for the lost soul and the act of rescuing it to return it to the fold.
- Love and protection: The image evokes God's unconditional love and Jesus' protection of his flock, even to the point of sacrificing his own life.
- Search and rescue: The Good Shepherd actively searches for the sheep that have strayed and defends them from all harm.
- Ancient origin: The figure of the shepherd rescuing the lost animal is a common artistic motif since antiquity, adopted by early Christianity as a secret code.

When we read John 10:11-18, we can recognize a beautiful image of Jesus: that of the Good Shepherd. His characteristics give meaning to His being and doing among the multitude that seeks, follows, and accompanies Him.

Jesus' statement is clear: "I am the good shepherd". With these words, it is evident that His life and work are united in one identity: that of being the Good Shepherd, thus distinguishing Him from other shepherds of His time.

The Good Shepherd, besides being the owner of the sheep, gives His life for them because He cares about them.

Who is not a good shepherd is not the owner. He receives his wages for taking care of them for another. He does not give his life for them. When imminent danger approaches, he abandons them, and they are not important to him if they are lost or die.

Jesus, as a divine being, takes care of His sheep. He gives His life for them because they belong to Him and are important to Him. Jesus has a special relationship with His sheep; He knows the entire flock and shows no favoritism. He cares about keeping them all in the same fold, so they form one flock. Jesus' love is unconditional; that's why He gives His life for each of His sheep.