



# ST. JAMES BASILICA of Jamestown

Parish Newsletter

JUNE 2014



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 A Farewell and "Thank You"  
By Fr. Al Bitz
- 4 Caring for God's Natural Gifts
- 6 FACE Brings Together St. John's Academy Backers
- 7 A Farewell to Our St. James Community  
By Sister Michaeleen Jantzner O.S.B.

# Saying Goodbye to the "Best of the Best"

This May, St. John's Academy bid farewell to one of its most precious gifts - Mrs. Pamela Hansen. For the past 29 years, Mrs. Hansen has blessed our school community with her faithful, dedicated, energetic presence as a teacher for kindergarten for 27 years and pre-kindergarten for two years. Although we will miss her dearly, and she will miss us, we will carry each other in our hearts.

"I can think of a lot of cute stories over the years, but one of the treasures I really take with me is the memory of working with the parish school families," Mrs. Hansen says. "They are very nice, kind and appreciative of everything you do. The parents are so active in the education of their children. At St. John's, we partner up with the parents in helping the children with their academic achievements, social skills and emotional development."



Before Mrs. Hansen began teaching at our school, she worked as a public school teacher for eight years, and she was grateful to make a change.

"I knew some of the teachers at St. John's Academy, and they told me to apply for the kindergarten teaching position that was available," she says. "Although I am Lutheran, my pastor told me what a wonderful opportunity it would be to work

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*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## A Farewell and “Thank You”

Dear Parishioners,

I was completely happy as Pastor of St. Leo's in Casselton and St. Thomas in Buffalo. Then I was approached about coming to St. James Basilica, St. Margaret's, St. Mathias and St. Michael. I said I would consider it if the deans and the bishop thought I had some gifts that were greatly needed. They were looking for a pastor that could be a unifier.

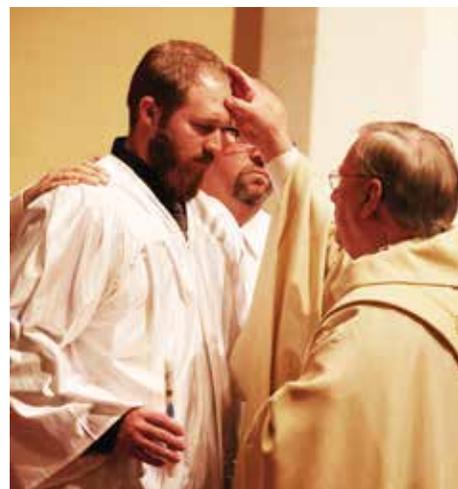
Thus I came with the mission of being a unifier. I knew that I could not be a unifier unless I really loved the people. I prayed for that gift. It surprised me one particular Sunday morning several months later, when I looked out on the people with love. It surprised me that it happened so soon.

So it is that my ministry began in love. I was so thankful to God for that gift. I knew that it indeed was a gift – a gift that was essential for an effective ministry of unity. The staff that was in place was great, and they were supportive and encouraging. They responded positively and with unity to the long-range planning, as

well as to the goals and strategies that evolved from the planning process. They had patience during those times when some things took longer than others.

I greatly appreciated the pictorial directories the parishes had published over the past years – these have allowed me to recognize and know people's names. That was a first priority for me. Even before I came here, I had secured a directory that I could study and memorize. These were the first steps in knowing the people of the Jamestown area. It was their needs that called me to use my God-given gifts in their service. This, in turn, required that I also know the individual parishioners' gifts. Furthermore, it required that I invite people to use their gifts in the service of others so that our parishes really become participative, not only in the liturgy, but also in daily life: “Go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!”

The liturgical life of the parishes was my first concern. Vatican II had



stated that the “participation of the people in the liturgy” was the first principle in reforming the liturgy. It was from this experience of the One Unifier and Reconciler – Jesus Christ – that a unifying and reconciling parish would evolve.

I knew that the long-range plan included some building projects. I didn't see them as the highest priority, nor were they in the front of my mind – service as a parish was a greater concern. It was only when some parishioners came to me and suggested we build a priests' house – right in the midst of the housing depression – that I began to take that seriously. In the ensuing discussion by the Pastoral Council, I told them that if they strongly suggested we do this, I would jump into it wholeheartedly. However, I also expected each one of them to do the same. It would have to be a unified and unifying effort: “Father, may they be one as You and



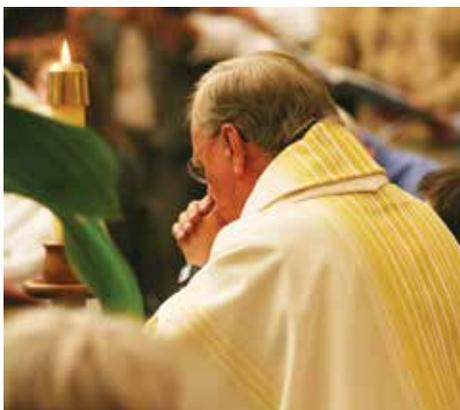
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## A Farewell and “Thank You” *continued from page 2*

I are one so the world will believe!” Our unity would be our great way of evangelizing the greater community.

The next step was to help people have a retreat experience. Through these experiences, they would personally get to know Jesus, as well as their own giftedness. It is such a great joy that Living Your Strengths has involved more than 150 people. They know their God-given gifts and the call to use them in service of others. What an encouragement that, after going through a Cursillo retreat, many have become involved in weekly groupings. What a gift to our young people that more and more have been a part of the Search retreat. They have become a part of our Faith Formation, which has excellent leadership.

St. John’s Academy has steadily developed and grown. We now have programs for our children aged 3 through the sixth grade. We do not have to exclude any child “because they can’t afford it,” due to the support of FACE, the SJA foundation. Parents



need St. John’s Academy – they need the community the school provides. It gives them hope and strength that they can be good parents through their Domestic Church; that they can be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith; that they don’t have to do it alone; that they have the constant support of other families; that they have the support of the entire parish community.

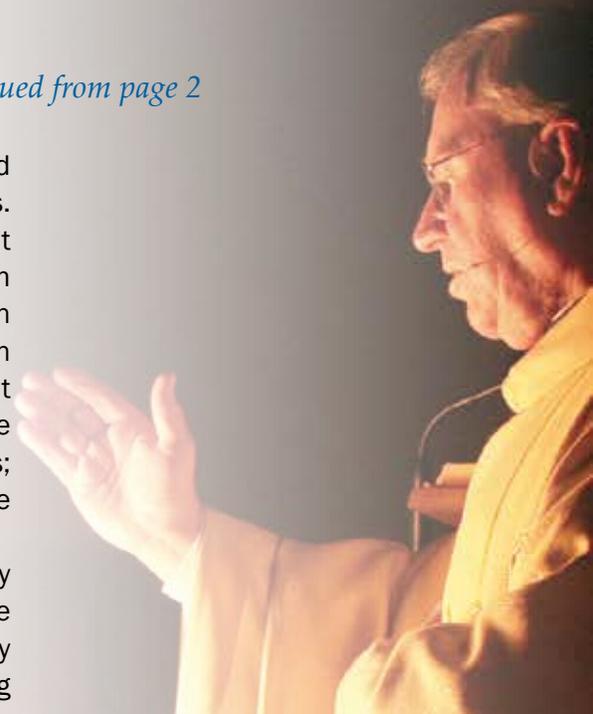
Thus, it is with sadness and joy that I move into a new phase of my life – ministry at the University of Mary and retirement; sadness at leaving you faith-filled people who have become a deep part of my life; joy at moving into a phase of experiencing my own family, my own Domestic Church and being a part of the inspiring ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Annunciation Monastery through the University of Mary.

Thank you!

“May God the Eternal Father keep you in love with each other so that the peace of Christ may stay with you and always be in your Domestic Churches. May you always bear witness to the love of God in this world so that the afflicted and the needy will always find in you generous friends and welcome you into the joys of heaven.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Al Bitz  
Pastor



**“May God the Eternal Father keep you in love with each other so that the peace of Christ may stay with you and always be in your Domestic Churches. May you always bear witness to the love of God in this world so that the afflicted and the needy will always find in you generous friends and welcome you into the joys of heaven.”**



*Working on the northwest corner of the grounds.*



*Placing new sod on the southeast lawn.*



*Fr. Arogya and Fr. Bitz picking apples.*

# CARE for G

As stewards of God's gifts, it is important for us to remember that everything we have — everything around us, down to the very earth beneath our feet — is a gift from God. That's why it is important to take care of the property given to our parish, and to ensure that it is a welcoming sight for those who come to our church.

"I like to keep it looking nice for everybody," says Paul Wiest, custodian for St. James Basilica. "I say that I treat the church like my house, but I have a lot of guests."

Earlier this year, our parish was recognized for its outstanding landscaping. In February, St. James Basilica received the 2013 Landscaping Award from the Chamber of Commerce. Paul, Fr. Al Bitz and two parishioners, Gretchen Barnick and Miranda Letherman, who have assisted with the care of the church grounds attended the award ceremony and accepted the award.

"I guess it means that I'm doing a good job," Paul says. "I always see things that are wrong, and everybody else just sees how pretty it is. I just try to keep up with it."

Paul has been working as the custodian for our parish and taking care of the parish grounds for almost 30 years, and this is not the first time he's been recognized for the work he has done for St. James Basilica.

"It's my job, it's what I do," he says. "I don't like anything that's out of place or looking bad. If it's weedy, I get after the weeds."

With the construction projects that have taken place throughout the parish in recent years, there have also

*"I like to keep [the church and parish]  
I say that I treat the church like my  
— Paul Wiest, custodian*

# ING God's Natural Gifts

been a number of changes in the landscaping, including the installation of some new flower beds. Paul also used former sandstone steps from the church and foundation stones from the original rectory (dug up during construction of the new priests' house) in the landscaping scheme. Last fall, several of these stones were marked with the date of the buildings and set in flower beds on the church grounds, and Paul also has some plans to continue using the stones.

"At first, I was going to throw them away – but then as they sat there for a year, I tried to think of things to do with them," Paul says. "One way was to put the dates on them and put them in the flower beds. And then this summer, I am hopefully going to use them to make benches in the flower beds. And that way they'll be used instead of throwing them out."

Paul had a number of parishioner volunteers help with these projects, and in this way they took part in keeping God's natural gifts and the gift of our parish grounds beautiful. It is a true calling to be stewards of God's gifts, and it is an opportunity that is always there.

"It's always – always – a work in progress," Paul says. "You're never done outside."

We offer our congratulations to Paul and all those who have helped make our parish grounds beautiful! For more information or to get involved, please call Paul Wiest at 701-252-0119.

*grounds] looking nice for everybody.  
y house, but I have a lot of guests."  
n for St. James Basilica*



*Father Bitz, Gretchen Barnick, Miranda Letherman and Paul Wiest accepting the Landscaping award!*



*Marker made from the former steps at the Basilica.*





## FACE Brings Together St. John's Academy Backers

In 1976, a group of Catholics and non-Catholics alike in Jamestown came together to make sure that St. John's Academy's future was secure. That effort is going strong today as the Foundation for Advancement of Christian Education, or FACE.

Joan Morris, board president of FACE, says that the purpose of the organization is to maintain an endowment fund for the school in order to provide scholarships. FACE was organized when a number of Catholic schools were closing in the area.

"The group wanted St. John's Academy to be available to offer a Christian Catholic education," Joan says.

A current fundraising campaign has the goal of "100 by 40," to make sure that FACE can provide \$100,000 per year to the school when FACE reaches its 40th anniversary in 2016. Thus far, an internal, or private, drive has raised \$225,000. The final goal is \$400,000. The campaign has been very low key with no outside campaign consultants being used.

"We like to keep our administrative costs at a very low level, so the work that has been done has been volunteer work by the board," Joan says. "We welcome any donations to our campaign. We are trying to fulfill our mission of 'providing for the security of St. John's Academy.' We are very grateful for all of the FACE donors. Their support throughout all of these nearly 40 years has been wonderful."

The academy currently has 255 children enrolled in Pre-K through sixth grade, with 40 percent non-Catholic. Roughly one-third receive some kind of tuition financial assistance.

The 15 members of the FACE board of directors are all residents of Jamestown and are themselves Catholics and non-Catholics, Joan notes.

"A lot of the board members have a history in the academy," she says. "Some have children who have left or currently are enrolled. The ages

range from the late 20s up to a 70-year-old. It's a very diverse board. But we all share one thing - we're all passionate about FACE and St. John's Academy. It's a very talented board."

Joan herself has strong ties to the school.

"I'm probably one of 25 members of my family to graduate from there," she says. "Four generations went there. That's why I think St. James Parish considers St. John's Academy the most precious gem they have. There's a lot of support and concern and caring you'll see about the academy in our parish."

Parental involvement is a crucial element of the St. John's Academy community. Not only do parents assist in the classrooms, but they also offer prayers for the students and serve on committees that support the students and the school.

Parents, teachers, students and parishioners all work together toward the school's purpose of guiding students to discover and develop their God-given gifts.

For information on making a donation to FACE, please contact Joan Morris at 701-269-9005.



*Marlys Gallagher presents a check for \$50,000 to several board members of FACE toward the foundation's campaign.*



# A Farewell to Our St. James Community

*By Sister Michaeleen Jantzner O.S.B.*

**H**ow do I say farewell?

I had been at St. Paul's Newman Center in Fargo for six years when I became aware of a possible opening at St. James.

I began my ministry of "pastoral minister" at St. James Basilica 27 years ago on Aug. 1, 1986. I am a member of the Benedictine Sisters from Mother of God Monastery in Watertown, S.D. For many years I wore a religious habit, but here at St. James I wore many hats. They were not straw, felt or fur, but many hats in the ministry of service to God's people. My pastoral duties were to develop a complete parish program of evangelization and campus ministry at Jamestown College. I was involved in educational and spiritual counseling, too. I had been here only two months when I was asked to assume the responsibilities of the Faith Formation program. I was also asked to lead the Baptismal classes, Marriage Preparation, RCIA and visit the hospitals, homebound, and help at St. John's Academy in various ways in the classrooms. Sr. Dorothy, the principal, said that at one time I had four offices. Working with the outlying parishes, the Tri-Parish – Sacred Heart, Fried; St. Margaret, Buchanan; St. Michael's, Pingree – was a great source of joy and friendships.

I loved my ministry at the campus of Jamestown College. The emphasis on evangelizing college students became a passion, and I often could be found on campus in the Kentucky Room at Westminster every other Thursday night for what was called "Prayer and Sharing Socials." Students had an opportunity to share their uniqueness of their faith

with others. I was able to share my Benedictine gifts of hospitality and welcome with an open-door policy.

Later, I became involved in the Liturgy training proclaimers, Communion ministers and sacristans. There also was a great need to help people with annulments, so I accepted this role, too. A lot of my time was spent helping people through the process, and when they finally received their annulments, I helped them to prepare and sacramentalize their marriage.

I also was secretary for the Ecumenical services for many years. It was great to be a part of St. James becoming a Basilica in 1989 and the renovation of the church in 1993. With this background, I enjoyed giving tours of St. James Basilica and sharing the stories of the beautiful stained glass windows. I am so happy that my tour can now be seen on the St. James Web page.

While here, I have worked with more than 30 priests and seminarians ministering to the people of St. James Basilica and outlying parishes.

I am very grateful to God for calling me to minister here. You have been a gift to me in my life, and I treasure the trust you placed in me as we walked our spiritual journey together.

*"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all" (Philippians 1:3-4).*



# ST. JAMES BASILICA OF JAMESTOWN

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## Weekend Eucharist

### *Saturday Vigil*

4:30 p.m. Eucharist

### *Sunday*

8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Eucharist

## Daily Eucharist

*Monday thru Friday* - 12:10 p.m. Eucharist

*Saturday* - 8:00 a.m. Eucharist

## Reconciliation

*Monday thru Friday* - 11:40 a.m. - 12 noon

*Saturday* - 3:30 p.m.

Address Service Requested

## Saying Goodbye *continued from front cover*

in a Catholic school. It was nice to hear my minister talk so highly about Catholic schools and their faith. It has really strengthened my faith over the years to be able to center my teaching on God and pray with the children. At St. John's Academy, God is the center of everything we teach. It is a whole different atmosphere than that of a public school, and I think many parents feel that right away."

As a teacher, Mrs. Hansen has seized the blessed opportunity to teach in a Catholic environment.

"The respect that I have for the Catholic faith is great," Mrs. Hansen says. "When I first came to our school, I didn't have a lot of knowledge of Catholicism, but by

teaching it and living it at St. John's I have grown in appreciation of it. The school does an awesome job in teaching the children about the Catholic faith. I have also been able to share my knowledge of the Bible with them."

Through thick and thin, she has also discovered the true joy of fellowship and friendship among her co-workers.

"It has been wonderful to teach with colleagues whose faith plays an important role in their lives," she says. "It is very different than teaching with co-workers who have no faith."

When asked what one of her favorite things about teaching is, Mrs. Hansen explains that it is

watching the children grow and flourish.

"Each year, I look forward to the month of March because that is when the students become more independent and comfortable with themselves," she says. "It is so nice to see them change from shy and timid to confident and happy. It is such a joy to see them learn about their faith over the year. You can see how the Holy Spirit is working in them. They know the difference between right and wrong, and what respect is. It comes from a lot of reading and talking about God."

As Mrs. Hansen retires, let us keep her as part of our community by praying for her often.

Best of the Best