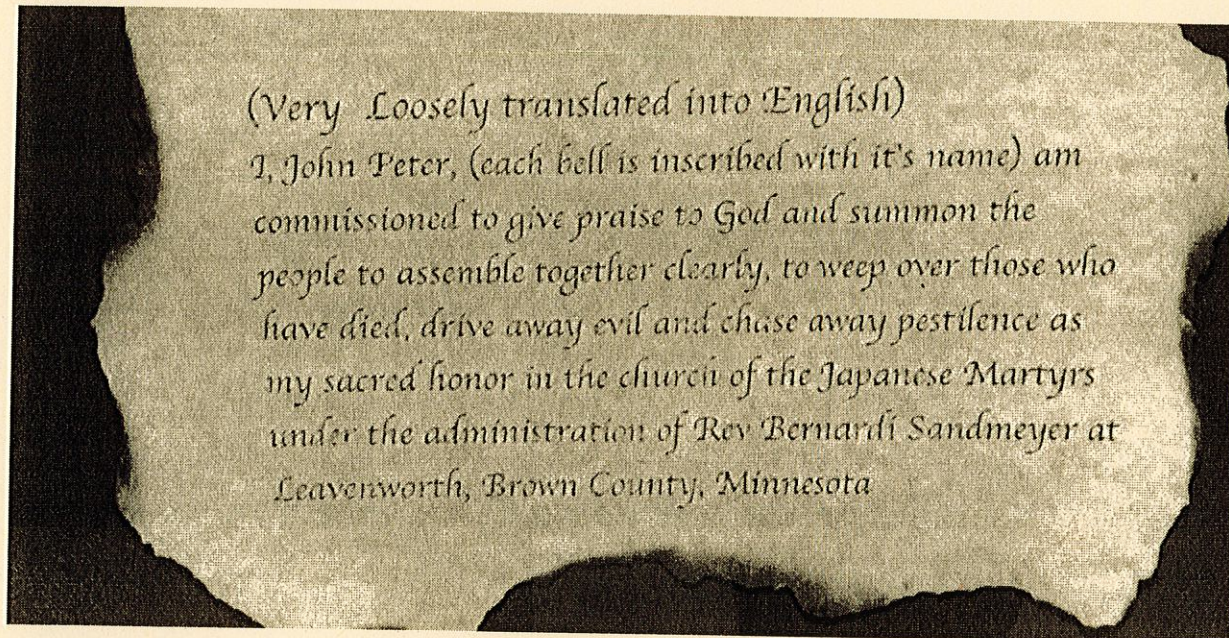


2017

As we approach the August 19 celebration of our 150th Anniversary as a Catholic Family, we decided the final artifact from our archives should be the oldest one. In our bell tower still resides the original bell of the Church of the Japanese Martyrs. The bell was created in St Louis, Missouri in 1891. It has a fantastic inscription on it that reads as follows:



In discussing this bell with Patricia Windschitl, we learned that

Jacob Eichens-Fierer, J.J. Schumacher, Frank Schultz, Jacob Schumacher, Joseph Mathiowetz, John Girg, Henry Hillesheim, John Haala, J.B. Augustin, Frank Windschitl, John Windschitl, the Brandl and Hornick families were the leaders of our Church at the time the bells were purchased and installed. The bells were moved from the second church to this – the third church during the 1914 addition.

George and Rose Windschitl were the people designated to ring the bells. One was called the Celebration Bell, the other was the Toll Bell. Often, Rose would ring the “Celebration” bell for one weekend mass while George would ring for the other. When a church member passed away, the “Toll” bell would be rung for the number of years that the person had lived. We still continue this tradition today with our new Carillon bells. Occasionally ringing the bells could be hazardous as when you pull too hard, the old bells actually tip over and out of their stand. So ringing the bells was a challenging job. We are blessed to still be able to ring our bells and will now ring it so that you can experience this part of our history. Please be sure to come to our celebration on August 19 and 20 and enjoy our heritage together!!

SANCTUARY LIGHT

Our article for July from the Church Archives is this sanctuary light. The sanctuary light is a small red flame kept burning continuously as a sign that Christ is present for us in the Eucharist inside the tabernacle. The sanctuary light is to be a reminder to those attending that Christ is a faithful presence both inside the Church and in our lives.

This sanctuary light was displayed early in our Church – probably through the 1960s. It was taken down and put away in the Church's attic. During the remodel during Father Bill Sprigler's time here, the contractors found this tucked away in the attic. This type of sanctuary light was displayed suspended from the center of the middle aisle. There is a pulley system in the attic space yet which runs a cable through the ceiling and over to the sanctuary where the cable would be used to raise and lower the candle for lighting during services and candle replacement. When the sanctuary light was changed to a floor mounted unit, this one was retired and stored away.

We value our heritage and are glad that parishioners in our past took the time to save these treasures of our past so that we might ponder the greatness of Christ through their use.

Japanese Martyrs Catholic Cemetery

In the middle 1800's settlers began to homestead in the Leavenworth area. These early settlers felt a strong need for a church where they could practice their faith. One such settler was John Joseph Schumacher. He moved, with his wife Theresa (Huiras), to the Leavenworth area in 1864 and in 1867 he and several other settlers built the first church. It was located in the middle of what is now the Japanese Martyrs Catholic Cemetery.

In 1865 Theresa's parents, Andreas (Andrew) and Anna Maria Huiras, also decided to settle in the Leavenworth area. Andrew Huiras died in 1868 and was the first person buried in the Japanese Martyrs Catholic Cemetery. (It has been told that he died in 1866 of cholera, was buried on the family homestead, and his grave was moved after the cemetery was established.) There are currently six generations of Huiras here: Andreas (Andrew), John Sr., John Jr., Edwin Sr., Edwin Jr., and Mary.

John and Gertrude Windschitl had ten boys: Frank B., Fred, Ferdinard, John R., Florian, Joseph, Micheal, Emil, Ernest, and George. Seven of those are buried here. That is the most from any one family.

There are many families with loved ones buried here. Some families have many: 38 Mathiowetz, 32 Winschitl, 25 Huiras, 24 Ludewig, and 21 Schumacher. There are well over 500 people buried in this cemetery. There is a baby section on the south side of the cemetery – not all graves are currently marked. If you are looking for that section, look for a marker "Meinser".

There are approximately 40 veterans buried here. They represent many different conflicts and wars. The earliest is a veteran, John Muckl, of the Spanish American War. (No Civil War veterans).

There is a section reserved for priests which is located in front of the cross. At present, Fr. Gerald Hillesheim and Fr. M. Nicholas Wilhelmy are buried here. Fr. Hillesheim, son of Ray and Odelia Hillesheim, grew up in the Leavenworth area and was a member of Japanese Martyrs parish. Fr. Wilhelmy was a teacher in a Seminary at Chicago and he was in Leavenworth for a rest when he fell down the church steps and broke his arm. He died of complications that set in.

The cemetery directory is located by the cross. It will help you to find the location of any grave site you may wish to visit. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact a cemetery board member: Chairman & Sexton, Donald Mickelson (766-2306); Assist Chairman, Jim Hillesheim (227-2171); Mike Mathiowetz (877-4037); Marty Haala (276-6515); Steve Lax (794-2298) and Pat Steffl (920-5059).

A special thank-you goes to Ron Windschitl, our maintenance person, who keeps our cemetery looking so nice.

Holy Family Societies

1899 - St Joseph Society of the church of the Japanese Martyrs was founded with 28 beginning members.

1905 - St Joseph Society Hall was built for meeting places, parish dinners and catechetical instructions.

1925 - The companion society of the St Joseph Society was formed. It was named the St. Mary's Society and was for women membership. It began with 18 members.

1931- St Joseph Society grew to 58 members
St Mary's Society reached 36 members

1948-1950's - Father Henry Sterner assisted society meetings to help organize fund raising for a proposed new school.

1955 - St Joseph and St Mary's societies totaled 212 members

1960's - Cloths Drives became annual events for the missions. Annual luncheons and fundraisers were popular with both societies.

1970's - Matching Grant Program was introduced and used by the societies to help promote and fund catholic education. All day Mardi Gras's were done for matching grant programs sponsored by Catholic Aid Association of Minnesota.

1976 - St Joseph society and St Mary's society voted to merge as one society. The new name would be Holy Family Society. With 188 members.

1980's-to the present- We continue to use sponsored programs for matching grant by putting on Pancakes Breakfasts, Volkswagen Supper, and using other services provided by Catholic United Financial.

2011- Non Profit Company name change from Catholic Aid Association to Catholic United Financial.

Today- Holy Family Society of The Church of the Japanese Martyrs of Leavenworth Council 109.
144 members. \$173,181.00 has been distributed through our society to our community from CUF sponsored programs since our beginning.