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About the Cover: Celebrating the life of the parish for 150 years — from the “shed church” to today.
“Change has never been this fast. And change will never be this slow again.”

— Gordon Moore

This observation by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore described modern technological advances, increased productivity, economic growth and social change. How does a religious institution like The Basilica adapt during times of change? And how to remain true to God — who was, is, and forever will be — during such dynamic times?

When the first members of our parish family gathered in a simple wooden shed 150 years ago, they were on the cusp of significant changes due to industrialization and post-Civil War reunification. Many generations later, we honor and continue their early ministries — serving people in need, hosting informational speakers, celebrating parish events, and, of course, serving the sacramental needs for the faithful of all ages.

This issue celebrates 150 years of faithfulness by this parish community. We look at the parallels between our forerunners — immigrants, families, people of all ages — and our vibrant Basilica community today. And we look to a future full of hope, with our parish community ready to serve Minneapolis as a spiritual home and place of peace and refuge for years to come.

Throughout our parish history, solemnities involving Mary, our parish patroness, are intertwined with significant parish milestones. Plans to build the Pro-Cathedral (now The Basilica) were announced by Archbishop Ireland on Christmas Day 1903. The first Mass celebrated at The Basilica was on Pentecost 1914, and the Solemn Dedication was held on the Assumption of Mary feast day, August 15, 1915. And our designation as Co-Cathedral of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis occurred on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1966.

As a balm to our modern times of continual and dynamic change, The Basilica is my anchor and compass. By sharing my time, talent and treasure with this community, I am able to honor the legacy of the parish members of the past and uphold our program and facilities for the generations to come. In the words of Archbishop Hebda at our sesquicentennial opening Mass, “You look pretty good for being 150!”

— Melissa Streit
A Parish for the Future
Building on 150 years

1. Parishes need to be places of welcome and acceptance. More and more often I see groups defining themselves by what they stand in opposition to, rather than what they support and value. Parishes cannot be places of division, exclusion, or separation. I believe that if a parish is to flourish and grow, the embrace of that parish can be no less than the embrace of our God’s love. We have a Big God. We need a Big Church. Together all of us compose the Body of Christ. Parishes which fail to be places of welcome and acceptance will be parishes that won’t grow and flourish.

2. Parishes need to be places of caring and companionship. By this I mean that parishes must be places that give voice to and are the physical expression of God’s love to those in need. We are companions and fellow travelers on the journey of faith. Parishes must give clear witness to and be concrete examples of our common discipleship in Christ Jesus by our care and concern for everyone.

3. Parishes must be places of challenge and disappointment. Parishes must continually challenge people by always raising the question: “What more is God asking of us?” In this regard, I think people — and parishes — function best when they are at the edge of, as opposed to the middle of their comfort zone. Parishes must constantly challenge people not to grow too comfortable. In striving to do this, though, there is bound to be disappointment. Parishes cannot meet everyone’s expectations. I believe that is a good thing. If parishioners are never disappointed in their parish, they are asking too little of their parish.

4. Parishes need to be places where people’s faith is informed and where their spirits are nurtured. Most obviously this occurs through programs of education and enrichment for all ages. It also occurs, though, through the witness of people’s lives and through the sharing of their faith. What helps parishes to do this, it seems to me, is to never lose sight of the fact that everything parishes do must be done in the name of and in response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Parishes must always be places of worship and prayer. People in parishes may not always agree with each other, they may face difficulties and conflicts, but something is wrong when people cannot set aside their differences, and worship and pray together. When we worship and pray together we acknowledge that we are not sufficient unto ourselves and that we need God. It is only in prayer, expressed and experienced in our worship, that a parish can discern God’s abiding presence and know the guidance of God’s Spirit. Without prayer our best efforts must surely fail short and our best hopes are not enough.

6. Finally, parishes must always keep their eyes trained on the future. Parishes need to continually remind people that our ultimate destination is the Kingdom of God. Parishes that get too caught up in the here and now — important as that might be — run the risk of losing sight of their ultimate goal. Parishes do much good and important work, but if they are not also challenging people to prepare for eternity, they are bound to fail. We are journeys in this world, our ultimate home is heaven. Parishes must always keep this idea in the forefront of people’s minds.

The above are my thoughts about what parishes need to do and be as we move into the future. We are blessed, in that I believe these things are happening at The Basilica. Certainly, there is more we can and should do, but given what is already happening here, I am more and more convinced that the next 150 years at The Basilica will produce a future full of hope.

— Fr. John Bauer
AS THE BASILICA community begins a year long celebration of our 150th anniversary as a parish, I can’t help but wonder what the original members of the little “shed church” on the corner of 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue would think. Perhaps more importantly for me, as President of The Basilica Landmark Board of Directors, I hope they would be proud of our continued efforts to preserve, restore and advance The Basilica of Saint Mary for all generations.

This celebration of our parish shows the importance of the campus as not just a historic landmark but as “The Building of Hope.” We are proud to be a center for the arts, a refuge for those in need and a spiritual home to nearly 13,000 parishioners.

In the coming year, we have scheduled three practical, yet critically important, projects that would have pleased those who preceded us in the parish. The first is the repair of The Basilica School’s south entrance, currently unusable for safety reasons. At this doorway, steel lintel beams around the doors have completely rusted and temporary wooden beams hold them in place. We will renovate this entrance in accordance with National Historic Register guidelines, returning it to full usage.

Our second project is tuck-pointing, an ongoing, annual requirement to effectively protect the exterior of the building. Water naturally penetrates the porous surfaces of stone and mortar. Our climate does not help. Tuck-pointing is critical because the repeated freezing, expanding, and thawing within those spaces, causes cracks in the granite blocks and degradation of the mortar between them. The bell towers were repointed in 2015 and the dome was repointed in the summer of 2018, ensuring their integrity for the next several years. In 2019, the east and west portico of the building are scheduled to be tuck-pointed.

Finally, The Basilica needs to upgrade the digital sound system used for worship services and concerts held in the nave and sanctuary of the church. While this system did receive a partial upgrade in 2006 (a step in the right direction) it now has many components that are obsolete and can no longer be replaced. The combination of constant use and outdated equipment has taken its toll. We want all to feel welcomed at The Basilica — being able to hear is a vital part of that.

A generous community worked together to build The Basilica; thousands sharing their gifts of money and even treasured possessions to help build a masterpiece. Their generosity inspires us yet today as we improve our campus for the next generation of The Basilica community.

In the same way, a legacy is being formed right now, and our story will not only be told through the beauty and security of our treasured Basilica, but also through the history of those who found it to be “The Building of Hope.”

I want to thank those of you who support The Basilica Landmark with gifts to the Annual Fund or attended this year’s Landmark Ball. We hope you are interested in supporting our mission with a donation at thebasilicalandmark.org.

— Jim Jetland, President of The Basilica Landmark

2019 LANDMARK BALL

Mark your calendar for the Landmark Ball, May 18, 2019 at the Machine Shop in the St. Anthony neighborhood of Minneapolis!

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IN THE FALL of 1999, I took delivery of the first fat binder bulging with photographs and photocopies gathered by volunteer researchers at The Basilica and quickly submerged myself in the past of a small city block dominated by an enormous parish church.

Imagine how The Basilica of Saint Mary must have towered over the younger, smaller city in 1914 — commanding, graceful, adorned at the pediment with imagery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven, flanked by massive stone angels. One angel looks down toward the street, the other toward the sky, much like the parish itself. The Basilica block is urban and busy, filled with industry and purpose, populated day and night by people intending good in the world, and accomplishing it.

The life of the community, in days and years, is made up of a long string of small events. Individual prayers, daily Masses, the communion of children, drop in visitors who sit quietly for a moment, a helping hand to someone in need; these are the small events that, over time, make up the strong web of faith and history that form the actual Basilica, as opposed to the physical one.

In his history The Basilica of Saint Mary of Minneapolis: Historical and Descriptive Sketch, Monsignor James M. Reardon writes that early activities of the Immaculate Conception church included programs to help the needy, a parish library, public processions on Saint Patrick’s Day, and a leader, Father McGolrick, who became “one of the most prominent men of the town.” McGolrick “joined many civic organizations,” and “made his own the interests of the citizens.”

Today, The Basilica of Saint Mary is a church with tremendous social outreach programs; it has taken an active place in the public life of Minneapolis and made itself a stakeholder in its future. The Basilica has named a vision: “Seek the well-being for the city to which I have sent you. Pray for it to the Lord. For in seeking its well-being you shall find your own” (Jeremiah 29:7). This vision, and the programs that spring from it, are a natural evolution of the parish’s longtime place in the city’s affairs, and a response to the diverse character of its people.
Looking at its history makes it clear that The Basilica has always been an important church. Its leaders have come and gone from other key positions in the church hierarchy. As one indication, The Basilica has continued to be a place where financial resources have been found, and spent. The old Church of the Immaculate Conception cost $40,000 to build in 1872. The cost of The Basilica’s exterior, with groundbreaking in 1907, was close to $1 million. Then in the 1990s structural restoration and financing cost nearly $9.5 million.

From the very first, the church was the home for large and elaborate celebrations. Again and again in his book, Monsignor Reardon reports “thousands attending,” “a packed church,” for everything from formal ceremonies to May Day processions. The scale of the buildings and its grounds, which can be surprisingly intimate in the sacristy or the apse, welcome the masses; today’s Block Party, which can attract 20,000 people, is the descendant of those earlier events.

The real story of continuity, however, is always with the families who have been involved with the parish over time, and over generations. For those, The Basilica is not only a civic monument, to be filled periodically with crowds and decorations and celebrations. For many families, it is their parish church, with all the intimacy and ownership and responsibility that implies. Milestone events take place here: baptisms and first communions, confirmations and weddings and funerals. But the parish church is also the location of everyday worship. Sunday Masses, Holy Days, choir practices, church suppers, and the recognition and celebration of the liturgical year. Advent and Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter. These make up the regular, and well-loved, rhythm of church life.

Longtime parishioners have told me that they see something new every time they come into the church. Historically-minded visitors, by squinting slightly, can blur the edges of the contemporary crowd and glimpse earlier Sunday mornings, bathed in light from the windows and filled with the sound of music. Clothing changes, manners change, rules and habits change, but people still come up the steps from

Continued
McGolrick erected a frame building, known as the ‘shed church,’ which served the congregation as a house of worship until 1871. Monsignor Reardon describes McGolrick as “youthful, energetic, learned and devoted.” Father McGolrick is reported to have organized the St. Vincent de Paul conference to care for the needy members of the flock, a Father Mathew Total Abstinence Society, a parish circulating library of 500 volumes, bazaars, and a Saint Patrick’s Day celebration that included processions and plays. He also gave public lectures on historical and scientific topics “which were listened to by huge and appreciative audiences.”

All this activity was centered in the old “shed church,” which must have been a burgeoning community institution. When the cornerstone was laid for the new Immaculate Conception in 1871, Monsignor Reardon reports that the bishop preached a sermon to a congregation of nearly 3,000 persons. It was planned to be “not only the handsomest but the largest church in Minneapolis.” The church stood at 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue North, until it was razed in 1922.

Father McGolrick was succeeded as pastor by the Reverend James C. Byrne. When Father Byrne assumed the presidency of the Seminary of Saint Thomas Aquinas in September 1892, the Immaculate Conception parish was led by Father James J. Keane. “During the latter years of his residence in the parish he became convinced of the need of a new and more modern Church in another locality,” Reardon wrote. “The growth of the city and the changes necessitated by a commercial expansion made it evident that the new edifice would have to be built at some distance from the old site. The locality about the church was more and more given over to wholesale houses and manufacturing plants; and the people who resided therein were forced to move to outlying districts and, perforce, the church must follow them.”

Several sites were considered for the third building to house Immaculate Conception parish. Father Thomas E. Cullen, who had been ordained less than one year when he was chosen to lead Immaculate Conception in 1902, was ordained by former pastor and then Bishop of Duluth James McGolrick. Father Cullen was a man who “spent himself for the young people of the city. He popularized early Communion for children. His beautiful sermons were adapted to the minds of little ones. His children’s Masses became so popular that adults overcrowded the several Masses he served and special arrangements had to be made for the accommodation of the young.” In 1911, Lawrence S. Donaldson, a “prominent merchant and member of the parish,” purchased and then donated seven lots at 16th Street and Hennepin Avenue. The site for a new church building — now known as The Basilica of Saint Mary — had been found.
OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES

In 1999, Voices From a Landmark author Peg Guilfoyle wrote: “The turn of the 21st century is a golden age for The Basilica of Saint Mary. Growth, activity and engagement characterize the last ten years. Purpose and commitment to find its future. The Basilica calls itself, and properly so, a traditional church with a modern message.”

Her sentiment remains true as we look at the two decades since that statement was written. When Guilfoyle’s book was published, The Basilica was breaking ground on our Undercroft — previously unfinished basement space which still had a mud floor in places. Although modern in materials and features, the Undercroft’s architecture seamlessly and beautifully blends with the original Basilica interior.

Dedicated in the Jubilee Year 2000, the Undercroft includes a large gathering space, the Saint Teresa of Calcutta Hall, providing ample space for St. Vincent de Paul outreach ministries, after-Mass hospitality, plus countless events, receptions, and workshops. The Saint Joseph Chapel, inspired by Joseph’s trade as a carpenter, provides dedicated space for weekday Mass and worship services for smaller groups. Two reconciliation chapels, adorned with gilded domed ceilings and piercing rods of light, flank the chapel. Practical considerations were also addressed, with public restrooms (the first restrooms built in the church building itself), an elevator, catering kitchen, and fully-accessible entrances added.

Our St. Vincent de Paul ministries have seen a 144% increase in donations and a 168% increase in services provided over the last two decades with ample dedicated space for dignified daily outreach to our neighbors in need. Offering shoes, bus and gas cards, fees for identification services (driver’s licenses, state ID cards, and birth certificate reprints), plus referrals to numerous partner agencies for household items, clothing, job search support, and more. Additional caring and support programs were established, including ministries for employment, mental health, prayer shawls, Emmaus listeners, grief support, and disability awareness.

The Basilica is also committed to the celebration of sacred art, which can soothe, illuminate, and enable a spiritual encounter. Sacred art clearly tells stories of faith, either the Roman Catholic tradition or other religious traditions, or deals with fundamental human questions. The Basilica maintains a permanent collection of art covering many mediums, five centuries, and several continents. In our Saint John XXIII Gallery, numerous local, national, and international artists have been featured in solo or group exhibitions. The Basilica also hosts approximately 30 sacred music concerts each year with performances from a wide variety of music ensembles.

Continued
Detail of the bell’s casting date.

Michael O’Connell’s fifteen year tenure as pastor ended and Rev. John M. Bauer became the Basilica’s eleventh pastor in 2007. Under Fr. Bauer’s leadership, the community continues to flourish with solidified parish finances and significant capital projects completed around the campus.

In 2007, The Basilica Landmark (formerly Friends of The Basilica of Saint Mary Foundation) was established as a separate non-religious 501(c)(3) organization to preserve, protect and advance The Basilica buildings and campus. Their tireless efforts have provided funding for much-needed capital improvements and preventative maintenance at The Basilica. An Endowment Fund provides funding for upkeep of our historic buildings into perpetuity.

Some of the larger Landmark projects include replacing the church and school’s 1913 steam heating system with a highly efficient hot water system, energy-efficient LED lighting to the church’s front exterior facade, and interior restoration of the Narthex, Sacristy, and Saint Anthony of Padua chapel. An extensive renovation of the Reardon Rectory from 2013-2015 included construction of a four-story elevator tower, adding fully-readable restrooms, updating office and meeting spaces, adding central air and sprinklers, plus converting unused attic space into offices and dedicated climate-controlled space for our archives and sacred art storage. A new roof membrane material was installed on the church in 2016 and the annual tuckpointing work continued in 2018. Many of these projects improved environmental efficiency, accessibility, and provide ongoing savings to the parish’s operating budget.

Throughout the history of this amazing parish — spanning 150 years, two locations, three church buildings, and eleven pastors — there have been dedicated people who have lived and worshipped here, creating a diverse and vibrant community. The parish has always welcomed immigrants, served people in need, and been a beacon of hope and place of peace in Minneapolis and beyond. “This anniversary is about celebrating the Basilica community, the people of the parish,” says current pastor Fr. John M. Bauer. “We plan to not just look back, but look ahead to the future growth and needs of our parish community.”
Life in 1868

Looking back 150 years ago

1868 at a Glance

- US President: Andrew Johnson; Ulysses S. Grant was elected in 1868 and took office in 1869
- Minnesota Governor: William Marshall
- Minneapolis Mayor: Dorilus Morrison through April; Hugh Harrison
- Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution is adopted, guaranteeing due process of law and full citizenship to African Americans
- Treaty of Fort Laramie (also called the Sioux Treaty of 1868) is signed
- Memorial Day observed for the first time
- Wyoming Territory is organized
- William “Buffalo Bill” Cody serves as a scout for the US Army
- First volume of Little Women by Louisa May Alcott is published
- Jean-Martin Charcot diagnosed Multiple Sclerosis
- Helium is discovered
- Thomas Edison applies for his first US patent
- W.E.B. DuBois was born in Massachusetts
- Immaculate Conception parish founded; construction of “shed church” begins

In 1868, the livelihood for most families was tied to agriculture and farming techniques that hadn’t changed significantly in over a century. When our modest “shed church,” as it was known, opened on the banks of the Mississippi River in 1868, the country and our community was on the cusp of widespread changes across many facets of life, including post Civil War politics, the growth of industry and commerce, and shifts in general societal trends. In a few short decades, Fraser notes, “the world had shifted so rapidly from subsistence agriculture to a market economy.”

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A NEW STATE AND A GROWING CITY

Minneapolis was founded in 1854, recognized by our State Territorial Legislature in 1856, and incorporated as a city in 1867. The Bridge Square neighborhood, so named because of its location at the southern end of the Hennepin Avenue bridge, was the commercial center and government seat of our growing city. The area was served by a single spur railroad from St. Paul to Milwaukee and Chicago. Milling was the primary industry; in 1869 the city produced 256,100 barrels of flour and 91 million board feet from sawmills.

The first census in Minnesota, taken in 1850, recorded 6,000 people in the Minnesota territory. By 1860, taken after Minnesota became a state, there were 172,000 people counted, and 400,000 people a decade later. Legally questionable treaties with American Indians after the bloody US-Dakota War in 1862 seized tribal lands and made them available to any “citizen or intending citizen” through The Homestead Act if they lived on the land for at least five years. Construction projects, delayed by the Civil War, brought more railroads and roads throughout Minnesota and lessened dependence on rivers for transportation.

The census of 1870 provides more insights on our growing area. Germans, Norwegians, Swedes, and other Europeans, many moving from northeastern US states, flooded to Minnesota to stake land claims. Census tallies cited 36% of the state’s population was foreign-born, 23% were born in other states, and 23% were born in Minnesota. By contrast, in 2015 only 8% of Minnesota’s population was born in a foreign country.

In 1870, 57% of the state’s workforce was employed in agriculture, with 21% in a service industry, 14% in manufacturing or mining, and 8% in a trade or transportation. There were approximately 46,000 farms in the state, with most farms between 20 and 100 acres in size. The census reported 866 churches in Minnesota spanning 15 denominations; 225 of those were Methodist congregations, with Roman Catholic and Lutheran following as most common.

DAILY LIFE

The year 1868, when our “shed church” was constructed, started with extreme cold in January with a rapid warm-up in March, allowing for an early wheat seeding. Favorable weather followed in May and June. July was the hottest month in almost 40 years with afternoon temperatures in the mid-80s or higher, allowing for record harvests of both corn and wheat. The fall was cool, wet, and “exceedingly unpleasant,” according to the St. Paul Daily Pioneer newspaper; a snowstorm even struck the evening of September 23. Cool and wet weather continued through the September opening of our “shed church” and into October and November, filling local rivers and flooding many cellars. The year ended with moderate temperatures and light snowfall.

Accounting for inflation, $1 in 1868 would now be worth about $17.75. Sugar cost about 7¢ per pound, flour was 4¢ per pound, and coffee was 12¢ per pound. One could buy 2 apples or a pound of cheese for a nickel. The price for a new cook stove was $25, chairs were $1.25 each, and a bed, bureau, and commode cost $15. A year’s supply of coal for one household was about $80. Montgomery Ward’s first catalog, published in 1872, sold six pairs of men’s socks, seven yards of denim, or three yards of cashmere each for $1. Plain calico or cotton fabrics for work dresses or household linens cost 10¢ to 15¢ a yard.

Apparel for both men and women was still quite formal. Women typically wore heavily embellished full-length skirts with petticoats and hooped crinolines. Daytime dresses, worn with corsets, featured bodices with high collared or lace necklines and full sleeves, while evening bodices usually had short sleeves and lower necklines. Long hair was often parted in the middle, smoothed or waved around the ears, and then braided or turned into a low bun. Bonnets, hats, and hair nets were often worn.

Men’s fashion remained similar to the previous decade, with linen or cotton collared shirts, wide neckties, full-length pants,
and heavy frock- (knee length) or sack-
(slightly shorter) coats worn, often with a
vest or waistcoat. Top hats were still worn,
with felt bowler hats increasing in popular-
ity. John B. Stetson introduced the dense felt
Boss of the Plains hat in 1865 to immediate
popularity, especially in the West. Men’s
hair was usually side-parted and frequently
smoothed with hair oil.

STATE POLITICS

Two issues loomed large in state politics
at this time: populism and African American
suffrage. Populism began in the rural areas
of Minnesota in the 1860s in response to
high railroad and milling prices. Oliver
Kelley, a farm owner from what is now Elk
River, Minnesota, organized six others to
form the National Grange and Order of
Patrons of Husbandry in 1867 to create a
common voice protecting the interests of
farmers and their families. Local chapters
formed quickly around the country and
Kelley helped found the Minnesota Grange
in 1868. Men or women could become
members and officers. Minnesota Grange’s
political clout grew through the early 1870s
but started to decline when Minnesota’s
congressional election divided populist
parties. Nevertheless, many later populist
parties and organizations stemmed from
this movement and influenced state and
national issues, including protection for
workers, labor reform, prohibition, and
women’s suffrage, into the twentieth century.

Most Minnesotans supported Lincoln’s
emancipation policies, yet African American
citizens in the state could not vote, hold
political office, or serve on juries. In 1865
and 1867, amendments were offered to
remove race from state voting requirements;
while gaining in support, they did not pass.
In 1868, the same year our “shed church”
opened, the Governor implored lawmakers
to issue a vote, and a bill passed in both the
state House and Senate that March. Minne-
sota and Iowa were the two Northern states
calling for an African American suffrage
amendment referendum on the November
1868 ballot. One year later, the Governor
proposed the fifteenth amendment to the
US Constitution, which was approved by
three-quarters of the states and certified by
the US Secretary of State in 1870.

NATIONAL NEWS

Similar to our current political climate,
the late 1860s were dynamic times brim-
mimg with political discontent. Andrew
Johnson, once a senator from Tennessee
and a fierce critic of the Southern secession,
was appointed by Abraham Lincoln as the
military Governor of Tennessee in 1862 and
elected Vice President in 1864.

Upon Lincoln’s assassination in April
1865, Johnson was sworn in as President
and embraced Lincoln’s lenient post-Civil
War reconstruction policies, which set the
stage for a bitter showdown with Congress.
In March 1867, Congress passed the
Tenure of Office act (over the president’s
veto), which prohibited the president from
removing officials confirmed by the Senate
without Senate approval. The act protected
members of Johnson’s Cabinet, including
the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton,
who was appointed by Lincoln. Johnson
attempted to replace Stanton with General
Ulysses S. Grant in Fall of 1867. Fearing
legal action, Grant turned the office back
to Stanton after Senate passed a measure
in protest of the dismissal.

In February, Johnson appointed General
Lorenzo Thomas as Secretary of War.
Stanton refused to yield the office and the
outraged House of Representatives approved
eleven articles of impeachment detailing
Johnson’s “high crimes and misdemeanors.”
This was the first impeachment of a Presi-
dent since the office was created in 1789. A
Senate impeachment trial followed, but the
35–19 vote in May 1868 was not the two-
thirds majority needed to convict him, and
Johnson remained in office.

Melissa Streit has been an active volunteer
and parish member since 1996.
A Parish of Immigrants

A 150 year journey continues

WHEN the seeds of The Basilica parish were planted in 1868, Minnesota was in its infancy, becoming the 32nd state in 1858. In the many decades that followed, tens of thousands of immigrants flocked to the state from across Europe pursuing a better (albeit colder) life.

BY JOE EIDEN
Today, Minnesota’s story is not dissimilar. According to US Census data and refugee-support agencies, our state has the highest number of refugees per capita nationwide. While Minnesota has just two percent of the US population, it has 13 percent of its refugees. Our history calls The Basilica community to respond to our brothers and sisters in need.

The pioneers of the early Basilica parish emigrated from primarily Ireland and Italy. In the mid-1800s, Irish immigrants fled to the US as the impact of the Great Hunger shook the island nation. The Italian Unification caused widespread political and economic upheaval in the country, driving many Italians overseas. Fleeing famine and political unrest, these immigrants experienced perilous voyages on their way to a hope-filled new life.

Upon arriving in Minneapolis, their faith was likely one of few familiarities and yet foundational in their lives. Completed in 1868, the iconic “shed church” was described by Monsignor James Reardon — who served as pastor of The Basilica for over four decades — as “primitive,” yet it served as the foundation of The Basilica community we experience today.

The Basilica community looks much different from 150 years ago. While the beautiful building we have today has stood for over 100 years (and will stand for another century thanks to restoration efforts by The Basilica Landmark), those who enter the doors daily and weekly experience a more diverse array of cultures and races than ever before. And it’s no accident that this is a hallmark of the Basilica community.

In many ways, the immigrants of today and The Basilica pioneers share similar stories. In more recent decades, The Basilica has welcomed many African immigrants fleeing civil war, and our community’s Latino population continues to grow. Most are in search of a better life, and for parishioners like Sonya Kith, that was the case in the early 1980s.

After being displaced because of the Vietnam War, Sonya’s family fled to Cambodia and lived in a refugee camp, where her twin sisters were born. Her family came to Minnesota thanks to a Catholic organization, which helped her family begin a new life in Rochester. Shortly after arriving, Sonya was born in Minneapolis in 1985. A Catholic nun, Sr. Judy, took the family under her wing and was a counselor and advocate for a growing family.

It was the seeds of Sr. Judy’s kindness that encouraged Sonya to explore the Catholic faith years later. “It’s The Basilica’s open and welcoming environment that attracted me,” she says. Her daughter, sitting patiently next to her, will begin her first year in a Catholic school this year. Upon entering The Basilica’s RCIA program last year, Sonya recalled the influential people who walked with her on her journey. People who personified the welcoming feeling that brought her to The Basilica. For Sonya, that refreshing openness is what affirmed her decision. Sonya was baptized and confirmed during the Easter vigil on March 31, with Sr. Judy in attendance.

The Basilica community continues the same work that saved Sonya’s family. Not in the hope of planting the seeds for future RCIA candidates or Catholic school students. Rather, because it is what we are called to do: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Basilica’s Refugee and Immigrant Ministry is just one way we have answered that call.

It is up to our community to continue to open wide its arms for our immigrant brothers and sisters. Amidst the debate and rhetoric around the world regarding immigrants and refugees, Pope Francis continues to guide us: “A person’s dignity does not depend on them being a citizen, a migrant, or a refugee,” he commented this past summer. “Saving the life of someone fleeing war and poverty is an act of humanity.”

Sheela Ponusammy and Anto Pitchiah moved to the United States from India in 2013 with their daughters Sammy and Shawn (now ages 10 and 7); two years later they started coming to The Basilica. “For our first two years in the US, I didn’t know how people would react to us. But then we came to The Basilica and everyone encouraged us. We are thankful to God,” she says with emotion thick in her voice. “The people at The Basilica make us feel like we are one family. I don’t know how to explain my feelings, but it is a great thing. This church has a platform for everyone to show their love for God.”

Continued
THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY is proud to partner with Lutheran Social Services to co-sponsor refugee families who are starting new lives in Minnesota after living in refugee camps throughout the world. We also partner with Advocates for Human Rights to support people seeking asylum in the United States from areas of violence all over the world. All of the families we have sponsored have been very different. However, they have all been extremely grateful and gracious as they settle into life in Minnesota. Their lives are filled with activity as they seek to learn English, enroll their children in school, find work, and care for medical and dental concerns.

REFUGEE FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY THE BASILICA
3 families from Somalia; 1 from Iraq; 1 from Ethiopia; 1 Karen; and 3 from Burma/Myanmar.

Somalia, February 2016
A family of six: two parents and four young people. This family was originally from Somalia, but spent the last 22 years in a refugee camp in Kenya.

Iraq, July 2016
A family of two parents and three small children arrived in Minnesota. This family was originally from Iraq but was living as refugees in Turkey.

Burma/Myanmar, February 2017
The family had been living in a refugee camp in Thailand for 17 years. They are Karenni — a different ethnic group from Karen, but also from Burma/Myanmar. A mother, father, two daughters 9 and 6 years old, and a son 17 months.

Somalia, May 2017
A small family from Somalia, including a woman with a 10-month-old child, pregnant with her second child. They lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for many years.

Somalia, January 2018
A family of eight originally from Somalia. Secondary migrants to Minnesota. Mother, father, and six children: five sons, ages 15, 14, 13, 11, 9, and one daughter who is 3 years old. They now live in Minneapolis.

Burma/Myanmar, February 2018
A Karen family of eight originally from Burma/Myanmar, fled to a refugee camp in Thailand in 2006. Mother and father with six kids: two sons ages 14 and 1, and four daughters ages 12, 8, 6, and 3.

Ethiopia, February 2018
The mother and father are originally from Ethiopia, but lived in Nairobi, Kenya, for many years before coming to the US. Father originally resettled in Colorado in 2014. Mother resettled to Colorado with their two sons in 2016, and the family quickly moved to Minnesota. They now have three children – two sons in kindergarten and pre-school and a daughter who just turned one.

Burma/Myanmar, June 2018
The family is Karenni, originally from Burma. There is a mother, father, and two young daughters ages 4 and 6. They are coming from a camp in Thailand and have been there about 20 years.

THREE ASYLEE FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY THE BASILICA

Djibouti, March 2017
A mother and her teenage son are in the asylum process. Both are multi-lingual; the son speaks fluent English, French, and Arabic and his mother speaks Oromo, Amharic, Arabic, and is learning English.

Cameroon, Matched: April 2018
A mother is in the asylum process. She has a baby, born in the US, who is an American Citizen. She speaks English.

Liberia, Matched: May 2018
A single woman from Liberia is in the asylum process. She speaks English.
DURING my tenure as The Basilica’s archivist, we have celebrated a lot of anniversaries. We love to celebrate and love to embrace our history. But when we started discussing how we would mark 150 years of this parish, it quickly became clear that this is about more than beautiful buildings and charismatic priests. The parish is first and foremost about the people within it.

So over the course of this year, we will be introducing you to 150 parishioners who made the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the Pro-Cathedral of Saint Mary, and The Basilica their faith home. Some were prominent donors or contributors to the life of the parish. Others made their mark beyond the doors of the church.

For each year, from 1868 to 2018, we will tell the story of a parishioner. From December to July, we will share some of these stories through social media. In August, we will fill the Saint John XXIII Gallery and the Teresa of Calcutta Hall with tales of lives lived.

There is an intrepid team of volunteer researchers and writers assisting with this project. I would like to thank Mark Garcia for documenting the history of Master Jimmie Byrnes.

MASTER JIMMIE BYRNES

Martin Byrnes was one of the early settlers of Minneapolis. He and his wife had five sons and one daughter. One of his younger sons was known as “Master Jimmie, Boy Soprano.” Master Jimmie had been singing soprano solos at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and also played the organ for the children’s Mass. He was in much demand around the Twin Cities.

In 1899, Gertrude Haynes, producer of religious vaudeville called the “Choir Celestial,” came to the church and persuaded the fourteen-year-old boy to join her troupe, which, with his parents’ permission, he did. He sang in 700 consecutive shows all over the country.

When he was older, he became manager, music director, and composer of the group. Byrnes would periodically come back to Minneapolis to visit his family. In 1917, a musical called “ODDS and ENDS of 1917” opened on Broadway; James Byrnes was listed as composer.

Heather Craig is the archivist for The Basilica.

YOU CAN HELP!

Do you have a good story to tell about your life here at The Basilica?
Do you know someone who should be profiled?
Contact hcraig@mary.org.

James Byrnes in a photo from an article in the Minneapolis Journal, 15 June 1901.

The choir of the Pro-Cathedral of St. Mary on Easter Sunday 1917, with Fr. Cullen.
During the earliest years of the village of Minneapolis, Catholic families from many backgrounds worshipped at the “shed church” and later the Church of the Immaculate Conception. But as in St. Paul, the majority of the priests were Irish, and many leading families of our parish were Irish as well.

Irish immigrants were drawn to Minnesota in part by the efforts of Fr. John Ireland and the Irish Emigration Society. Founded in 1864, it actively recruited poor Irish families both from the home country and cities of the East Coast to settle in rural Minnesota, though some of them opted for city life instead. These Irish immigrants were sometimes disparaged. A Minneapolis Journal ad from September 1878 requests “a good girl to do housework in a small family. Good wages. No Irish or Catholics need apply.”

An editorial in 1874 by an Augsburg Seminary professor touts the superiority of Scandinavian immigrants over the Irish in particular, noting that “Catholicism has imposed servile fetters upon their spirits.”

These prejudices did not stop the Irish Catholic community from taking the lead in many civic affairs in the growing city. Of particular influence, the Total Abstinence Movement had political success with the regulation of city saloons and in curbing the drinking habits of parish men. At the 9th Annual Convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union in St. Paul in 1880, one speaker noted, “to be known as an Irish Catholic is almost equivalent to being known also as a total abstainer.”

Any accounting of the founding families of Immaculate Conception parish must start with Anthony and Annie Kelly. Born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1832, Anthony Kelly emigrated to Canada with his parents in 1847, coming to Minneapolis with his brother Patrick in 1858. He married Annie Willey, a widow with two children, in 1863. The Kelly brothers started a grocery business, which Anthony later grew into a large and successful wholesale trade business. He was an early advocate for a Catholic parish on the west side of the river and his support did not waver.

During construction of the stone church (1871), the Kellys were also building a new home. When funds in the church treasury
grew dangerously low, Fr. James McGolrick confided in Kelly that work on the church must be discontinued. Kelly gathered his family together, reportedly saying, “we will stop building our home and give them the money. For God shall not live in a hovel while we live in a palace.”

As a founding board member of the Catholic Orphan Asylum Association in 1879, Kelly accommodated the orphans in his own home until a suitable building could be found. In 1885 he was involved with Fr. McGolrick and clergy from several Protestant denominations in forming the Friendly Inn, a shelter for homeless and itinerant men, which provided short term food and housing so long as the men contributed some labor in an adjoining wood yard. In the early 1890s, Kelly paid $1,500 towards the church debt, nearly a quarter of the total outstanding amount.

Anthony Kelly died in 1899. His widow, Annie, and his daughter, Mrs. Alice Corrigan, continued to run the business for five more years before selling. The Anthony Kelly & Co. building still stands at the corner of Washington and 2nd Aves N, in the historic North Loop Warehouse District.

Jeremiah S. Coughlin was a different sort of pioneer. “Jerry” Coughlin was born in 1842 in County Cork, Ireland. He immigrated to New York at the age of 9. In 1864 he became a brakeman on the Milwaukee Railroad. Promoted to conductor in 1869, he reportedly piloted the first train ever run between Chicago and St. Paul. In 1875, he married Miss Martha (Mattie) Graham, daughter of the prominent Judge C. C. Graham of Red Wing. The Red Wing Argus noted that Coughlin “has a host of friends across the state, and is widely admired for his gentlemanly deportment and sterling qualities of character.” Mr. Fred Will, organist at the Saint Paul Cathedral, travelled to Red Wing to play for the wedding.

The Coughlin home hosted numerous social events in support of parish charities. One 1894 event brought together Mayor William H. Eustis and Rev. Dr. M. D. Shutter, a popular Unitarian pastor who related a “humorous story of being taken for a Catholic Priest” upon first meeting Coughlin. Coughlin was president of the Irish American Bank until its closure during the Bank Panic of 1896, though he never left his beloved position with the railroad. His finances took high losses during the bank failures, but his widow was still a generous supporter of the new Pro-Cathedral of Saint Mary. Archbishop Ireland himself gave the eulogy at Coughlin’s funeral.

Coughlin’s only son, William, was ordained in 1917, and said his first Mass at Immaculate Conception. He was a professor of history at Saint Thomas College until his early death in 1925. Jerry’s daughter, Helen, remained a parishioner but never married.

Sometimes it took a generation for an immigrant family to become fully enmeshed with the parish. Patrick H. Prendergast came to Minnesota with his parents and five brothers from Ireland in 1856. They settled in St. Paul, but Patrick made his own mark in Minneapolis, first with a Catholic bookstore, then for a time as a journalist with the Northwestern Chronicle. He and his wife, Bridget, had six children, many of whom were deeply involved in the life of Immaculate Conception. Two sons, Jeremiah and J. Henry, joined the priesthood; Fr. J. Henry was ordained by Bishop McGolrick in the parish church where he was raised, and Fr. Jeremiah served as Assistant Pastor at Immaculate Conception from 1895 to 1897. Their sister, Agnes, was organist for Immaculate Conception and the Pro-Cathedral until 1922. Their brother, Edmund, was the Secretary of the Pro-Cathedral Building Committee and later a Trustee for The Basilica. In 1909, he married Miss Georgia Willey Kelly, daughter of Mrs. Annie Kelly.

As integral as these and other Irish families were to the first forty years of the parish, by the 1920s their influence was waning. Italian immigrants, in particular, were moving into the neighborhoods around the Pro-Cathedral, but the size and nature of the parish meant that no single ethnic group would again dominate influence over the parish. As the city of Minneapolis grew and diversified, so too did The Basilica parish.

Heather Craig is the archivist for The Basilica.
Meeting the Needs of the Community

Volunteers then and now

I THINK there is an idea that because things always seem to run smoothly at The Basilica, we don’t need help. That’s absolutely false,” said Ashley Wyatt, Coordinator of Stewardship, Volunteers, and Membership at The Basilica. “We have an amazing staff, but there is no way staff alone can accomplish all the work of our ministries.”

The Basilica has been leveraging volunteer support to rise to meet the needs of the community for the entirety of its 150-year history. During World War II, Basilica volunteers rolled strips of gauze to serve as bandages for troops to support the war effort. During our recent Great Recession, The Basilica expanded its Employment Ministry to assist those out-of-work or in career transition with skills like resumé writing and interviewing. These are just two examples of how The Basilica’s faith community has lived out works of mercy in the Twin Cities and beyond.

“It is important for parishioners to get involved at The Basilica for a variety of reasons, but I think that the most important is that, at the end of the day, we are all called to service,” Ashley said. “God has gifted us all with unique talents, strengths, and interests which have equipped us all to each serve in our own unique way. As a parish we need all gifts, talents, strengths, and interests to thrive.”
The Basilica is blessed to have the support of more than 140 volunteer ministries of all kinds, from one-day commitments to ongoing involvement. Opportunities range from packing sandwiches for the St. Vincent de Paul ministry to assisting with faith formation for children and adults.

No matter what your passion is, there’s a ministry for that. Love to knit? Join the prayer shawl group! Love a good party? Volunteer to help at events like The Basilica Block Party, Basilica Day, or Fall Festival.

“It’s also not a lifelong commitment or something you need to get right on the first try,” Ashley said. “If you try out a ministry and it’s not a good fit, or you’ve served in one position for the past seven years and want to find something new, that’s ok.”

Read on for a highlight of one ministry that is currently making a big impact in advancing the church’s mission.

**IMMIGRANT SUPPORT MINISTRY**

The Immigrant Support Ministry partners with Lutheran Social Services to accompany new refugee families during their first year in the United States. The Basilica helps pay for rent and other necessities during that first year, while members of the Immigrant Support Ministry provide additional social support. For example, members accompany these refugee families on shopping trips for winter clothing, help orientate them with the public transit system and resources like public libraries, and enjoy fun family outings to places like the Como Zoo.

For many members of the Immigrant Support Ministry, welcoming immigrants and refugees to this country has deepened their faith and has become a great spiritual calling. Betsy Ramsey joined the group in 2017 and has found lots of satisfaction and joy in being able to learn more about Minnesota’s refugee population and form strong relationships with these refugee families and other parish members.

“By extending hospitality and service to refugees and asylees, we are helping to fulfill the mission of the Basilica,” said Betsy. “It is an engaging ministry as it provides one-on-one interaction with a diverse and international population. It continues to be a learning experience as we meet new refugee families.”

Last year, the Immigrant Support Ministry also started supporting asylum seekers. An asylum seeker is a person who has come to this country because of persecution and human rights violations in their home country but who has not yet been legally recognized as a refugee by the United States. The Immigrant Support Ministry partners with the Advocates for Human Rights, a Twin Cities-based legal advocacy group, to help support asylum seekers as they work to achieve legal status and a path to citizenship in this country.

For volunteers, the Immigrant Support Ministry provides a great opportunity to get to know people from around the world, learn about a new culture, and form meaningful and lasting connections with our new neighbors.

“When I joined the ministry in 2017, I helped accompany a Karenni family from Myanmar. I continue to stay in touch with the family, and I take them to their dental appointments,” Betsy said. “It gives me great joy to see their children grow and watch the family become more and more settled in their new country.”

Betsy is a fairly new member of The Basilica, but she was welcomed with open arms when she decided to join the group.

“If anyone wishes to become involved with the ministries at The Basilica, I would encourage them to do so,” Betsy said. “It’s easy to volunteer, and I have been welcomed enthusiastically. I continue to be amazed at how much is accomplished at The Basilica!”

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**GET INVOLVED**

Visit mary.org to view a full listing of the ministries seeking volunteers. Overwhelmed by the number of choices? The Basilica offers a Gifts Leadership Team that helps parishioners identify their strengths and find where they can best leverage those gifts to support the church.

“There is absolutely a place for you in our ministries. Volunteering is easy and hopefully, a fulfilling and fun experience for all of our volunteer ministers. We have some incredibly amazing ministries, ministry coordinators, and volunteers who are all incredibly passionate about the work they do,” Ashley said. “Their hard work makes a huge difference, not just in our parish, but in the surrounding communities as well.”

Rachel Newman has been an active volunteer and parishioner since 2017.
Carrying on a Basilica Tradition

Multi-generational families committed to service

“FOR everything there is a season,” wrote Qoheleth, whose teachings were recorded in Ecclesiastes long before The Byrds added a catchy refrain in the Sixties. A time to reap, to sow, to laugh, to cry, to dance, to heal, to embrace, and more. There is a time and place to everything under the heaven. Some Basilica families have spent many times and seasons at The Basilica, purposely weaving the parish into their lives multi-generationally.

The Streitz-Christensen family. (L to R) Michael Streitz, Ann Streitz Christensen, Bruce Christensen, Jane Christensen, Tom McCary, Ellen Christensen, and Charlie Christensen. (Right) Michael Streitz with granddaughter Daisy.
A century of Basilica membership

The STREITZ and CHRISTENSEN Families

The Streitz and Christensen families can now count four generations of active membership at The Basilica. Dr. Frank and Ruth (McDonald) Streitz were married at The Basilica in 1923. Their son, Michael, and his wife Patty (Tierney) Streitz moved to Minneapolis’ Kenwood neighborhood and joined the parish in 1960. Their three daughters, Mary, Ann, and Elizabeth, attended The Basilica School; Michael and Patty became active school and parish volunteers.

All of the Streitz daughters remained connected to The Basilica into adulthood, and Ann made The Basilica her family’s spiritual home. She married Bruce Christensen in 1984 at The Basilica, and he participated in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program in 2006. All three Christensen children — Charlie, Jane and Ellen — received their Sacraments at The Basilica and were cantors, choir members, Block Party volunteers, and youth ministry participants. Ann and Bruce chaired the 100th anniversary Centennial Ball celebration in 2007 and Ann served on The Basilica Landmark board. Today, Ellen sings with the Cathedral Choir, Charlie co-chaired the 2018 Basilica Block Party, and a fifth generation of Basilica connections started, with the recent baptism of Jane’s baby daughter, Daisy.

“To be involved at The Basilica gives me a sense of home,” explains Ann. “Much of my identity is tied to The Basilica, having attended the grade school in the 1960s and having parents so active in the parish when I was growing up. It’s been such a gift to see my children continue in that tradition.”

The CONROY Family

Jean (MacGibbon) Conroy grew up near The Basilica in the Kenwood neighborhood, and her mother, Lucinda (Hedding) MacGibbon, was a member of The Basilica. Jean received childhood sacraments at The Basilica, and recalls being anxious at her First Reconciliation and “a bit intimidated” by Monsignor Reardon. Jean and her sister Ann were married within two months of each other in The Basilica’s sacristy, each taking a turn wearing the same wedding gown. Jean’s husband was from Buffalo, New York, and he became an active member at The Basilica when they moved into Jean’s family home.

Through the years, Jean volunteered her time and was a weekly money counter until just a few years ago. Her son, Bill, is a lifelong Basilica member; here he received all his Sacraments, volunteered as an altar server, attended religious education classes, and served on an Ecumenical committee.

Margaret Harrington began attending The Basilica in 1993 and joined committees supporting the Undercroft development and the Families Moving Forward program. Bill and Margaret met at a Saturday evening Mass at The Basilica in 2001, when he struck up conversation with her about her broken ankle; they married one year later at The Basilica.

Their daughter Grace, age 15, was baptized and received her First Communion here, joined the Cherub Choir at age four, and continues to sing with the Juventus youth choir. As a child, Grace joined her mother, Margaret, and grandmother, Jean, to deliver Meals on Wheels monthly in addition to helping host Families Moving Forward.

Jean recently turned 96 years old; Bill, Margaret, and Grace bring her to Mass at The Basilica as the weather and her overall energy allows. Parish members always make a point to visit with her. Jean sees many strengths at The Basilica today, including a deeper sense of camaraderie among members, a greater commitment to community service, and a welcoming, positive atmosphere.

Continued
MULTI-GENERATIONAL participation at The Basilica doesn’t need to span a century. Other families, newer to our parish community, also find numerous ways to live their faith here as a family.

Volunteering as a family

The ODEN Family
Ross and Jane Oden joined The Basilica in 2008 and started volunteering as ushers and greeters in 2011, when their oldest son, Andrew, was a toddler. “Drew needed me to walk with him in church,” Jane says wryly, “so I figured we could be helpful too.” The whole family became familiar welcoming faces at the 11:30 AM Mass.

Now the Odens have four young children — “almost enough for a full hospitality team with our family!” she laughs. Ross and Jane wanted all their children to get involved early in their childhoods. “Given the opportunity, all my kids love to ‘help.’ It is important because it’s their church too.” Drew, now age seven, says he likes helping and cleaning; Leah, age five, says, “Going to church and helping makes me feel like Jesus is close.”

(L to R) Andrew, Emily, Matthew, and Leah Oden

Ross Oden passed away November 19, 2018. He was a beloved and devoted father, husband, son and parishioner. May he rest in peace and may his memory live on in the lives of his children.

The ARNASON Family
Jackie Peak and her father, Dave Arnason, are passionate volunteers with The Basilica’s Habitat for Humanity annual build week. Dave has been on The Basilica’s planning committee for three years and Jackie works at Habitat as the local Faith Relations senior associate.

They started volunteering at Habitat when Jackie was a student at Totino Grace High School. Dave was always handy and learned building skills from his father. After he and his wife Pam raised Jackie and her brother Alex in Blaine, they moved to downtown Minneapolis in 2012 and joined The Basilica.

Jackie moved back to Minneapolis after graduate school in 2014 and began attending The Basilica with her parents; she officially joined the parish in 2016 and attended marriage preparation and baptism preparation classes to be godparents. Their family has always been close — they laughingly describe themselves as the “Core Four”— so volunteering and worshipping together at The Basilica is a
natural fit. The whole family has helped at The Basilica’s Habitat build week for the last three years; Dave, Jackie and Alex help build, and Pam brought meals and refreshments throughout the day. This year they were joined by Jackie’s husband, Scott.

Dave describes The Basilica as electrifying. “You can close your eyes,” he says, “and feel the energy.” “The homilies urge us to look outside the walls,” Jackie adds, “and find God in the world.” And their entire family admires The Basilica’s dedication to the broader community and our neighbors in need.

For 150 years parish members have found meaningful and longstanding ways to be involved at The Basilica. By selflessly sharing their time and talents they have been faithful stewards, ensuring a vibrant and active parish community to pass along to the next generation of families who will make The Basilica their spiritual home.

Melissa Streit has been an active volunteer and parish member since 1996.

Voices From a Landmark

In 1999 The Basilica of Saint Mary commissioned the writing and printing of Voices From a Landmark, featuring stories from Basilica members through the years. Here are some quotes shared with the book’s author.

Even the iron handrails on the exterior side entrances have a story — they were donated over 60 years ago by Annie C. Quinlan, who thought it would be safer to have railings. Miss Quinlan and her sister Elizabeth were great friends, and frequent dinner partners of pastor Monsignor James Reardon. Members of that family have been in the parish from 1867 until the present day.

— Peg Guilfoyle, author

There was a small grouping in our neighborhood of about fifteen Italian families. The Piazzas and Cutaras and Famalaros and Natolis and Battaglias and Mandiles and so forth. That’s how it was in those early days. If someone came over from the old country, they’d live with friends who help them along. And that whole neighborhood belonged to The Basilica.

— Gus Zuccaro

We actually walked the distance from the 2nd and Penn area, and it was a long walk in the winter. Because we came from the west, there were only two large visible structures. One was The Basilica itself and the other was the Foshay Tower. The Basilica still stands out, but, well, the Foshay is no longer a large building!

— Clarence Birk

It was a cold and windy day on November 16, 1946, when Henry and I were married at The Basilica of Saint Mary. We were given 8 AM by Monsignor Reardon. The fact that our families had to drive in from the country was irrelevant. Hank’s family got up before dawn, milked the cows, did the chores, and drove over 100 miles and were at The Basilica before 8 AM and there were no freeways! We have seven children and eight grandchildren — a three-generation family at The Basilica.

— Kathleen Baron (deceased)
Voices from Our Community

Local civic and faith leaders share their thoughts on this historic anniversary

THE SESQUICENTENNIAL of The Basilica parish is a wonderful reminder of what can happen when we give God our “yes.” For 150 years, the Lord has been forming a community around a joyful celebration of the Eucharist and the proclamation of the Word, a community that, under the patronage of Mary, has taken to heart Jesus’ affirmation that whatever we do the least of his brothers and sisters we do unto him. I feel privileged to join you in giving thanks for the blessings of these past 150 years and I promise my prayers as you lovingly continue the important work that has been entrusted to you in this portion of the Lord’s vineyard. Congratulations!

—+ BERNARD A. HEBDA
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

WHEN WE ASSEMBLE at First Unitarian Society, we look out over the city and see two magnificent buildings — the Walker Art Center and The Basilica. Cutting-edge art and the strength and compassion represented by The Basilica. What better testaments to the spirit of Minneapolis? Congratulations on a hundred and fifty years in the city. Here’s to many, many more.

— DR. DAVID BREEDEN
First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY and the Minneapolis Institute of Art have similar roles as emblems of our city’s storied history. Both were designed in the Beaux-Arts architectural style and both were constructed in the early 1900s, when the country was rapidly urbanizing and the Twin Cities were establishing themselves as a hub of commerce. The Basilica opened in 1914, Mia in 1915, and from the start they served as Minneapolis landmarks and centers of civic pride. Yet their roles continue to evolve along with the city itself, an ongoing legacy of making an impact on the community.

— KAYWIN FELDMAN
Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia)

WORLD FAMOUS urbanist Jane Jacobs once wrote: “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created for everybody.” Public, private, and non-profit leaders alongside diverse faith communities applaud and extend gratitude for how The Basilica has been resilient in every congregational life cycle, and through it all, been both a model of Christian community and a catalyst to spur Minneapolis toward being a city that is created for everyone.

— REV. DR. DAN COLLISON
First Covenant Church
FOR 150 YEARS, The Basilica of Saint Mary has been a pillar of the Minneapolis community and has provided many Minnesotans a place to worship, explore their faith, and contribute to their community. I thank The Basilica’s ministry for their exemplary social outreach, stewardship, and service. Congratulations on 150 years of ministry! I pray that The Basilica’s future is filled with hope, peace, and prosperity for all its parishioners and neighbors.

— MARK DAYTON
Governor of Minnesota

GROWING UP IN ST. PAUL, whenever my family and I headed west on I-94 we would pass this awesome looking structure near downtown Minneapolis. That striking edifice was, of course, The Basilica of Saint Mary. Then I visited and went inside and saw the beauty within, a sacred space suited to worshipping the Lord and glorifying His holy name. For 150 years the parish has served its own faithful and ministered to countless others around The Basilica. It stands as a testimony to the beauty of God Himself and His love for all mankind. We congratulate you for 150 years of service to the people of Minneapolis.

— FR. GEORGE DOKOS
St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church

FOR SO MANY YEARS among the Muslim community and The Basilica, within Downtown Clergy Council, we have been participating in cooperative, constructive, and positive interactions between our people of different religious traditions, and spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional levels. That interfaith dialogue often involves promoting understanding between different religions or beliefs to increase acceptance of each other.

— DR. HAMDY EL-SAWAF
Islamic Community Center of Minnesota

LEGACIES ARE BUILT over centuries and today we celebrate The Basilica of Saint Mary’s 150 years of continuous dedication and commitment — not just to the spiritual elevation of its own community — but to the communities that surround The Basilica as well.

I have had the honor of presenting a variety of topics on Islam at The Basilica. The congregation has a special place in my heart because, in the divisive times we live in, The Basilica is asking the right questions and facilitating conversations that go beyond the surface. It’s digging deep and seeking to bridge communities through education, understanding, and empowerment. I have no doubt that the spirit in which The Basilica is operating will ensure a legacy that will live on for many more centuries to come.

— HANADI CHEHABEDDINE

FOR MORE than a century, Minneapolis College and The Basilica have stood side-by-side as neighbors along Hennepin Avenue with the common mission of creating hope and serving the needs of the community.

In 1914, the parish celebrated its first Mass in the new Basilica building and the College was founded as the Girls Vocational School by education pioneer Elizabeth Fish. The 1960s brought significant change as neighborhood dynamics changed, the new freeway system was constructed, and traffic increased. With both institutions firmly established on the western edge of Minneapolis in the 1990s, The Basilica introduced an annual rock concert to raise funds for restoration and outreach ministries and Minneapolis Technical College and Minneapolis Community College merged to serve a broader segment of the city’s population.

Since the turn of the century, our two neighboring institutions have continued to advance shared missions to serve the community through continually expanding their facilities, outreach and offerings. The stretch of Hennepin Avenue we watch over has become a symbol of hope, inclusivity, growth, and unity in social well-being.

— PRESIDENT SHARON PIERCE
Minneapolis College
JEREMIAH PROGRAM, a nationally recognized two-generation strategy to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty, was founded in Minneapolis on The Basilica’s vision to seek the well-being of the city and create a future full of hope. For the families served by Jeremiah Program since 1998 and all who are part of it, the opportunity has been transformative.

Through the engagement of Basilica parishioners and their collaboration with other congregations and community partners, Jeremiah Program was founded on the notion that our futures are inextricably connected. We know the value that comes from providing a safe, stable, and nurturing home for children. We also know the value of educating a mother.

We have seen that when we build bridges between various sectors — faith, government, business, education and philanthropy — and build on the strengths of our community, we become stronger and get closer to living the life God intended for us. A life filled with love, generosity, hope, and humility. The Basilica has been a catalyst for hope locally and across the country; our hearts are filled with gratitude and the promise of a bright future.

— GLORIA PEREZ
Jeremiah Program

THE MAGNIFICENT Basilica has always had a profound impact on the skyline of the city. But more important has been the work you can’t always see and touch; opening doors for those most in need, being a common ground for people across the boundaries of income and race, and simply being a place where we could be replenished from the day to day. As someone who was on the ground floor of The Basilica Block Party, it’s not a bad place to listen to music either. Thank you for all you’ve done.

— R.T. RYBAK
The Minneapolis Foundation
Former Mayor of Minneapolis

"The Basilica has been a catalyst for hope locally and across the country; our hearts are filled with gratitude and the promise of a bright future."

— GLORIA PEREZ
Jeremiah Program

THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY has been a loyal and powerful partner with Temple Israel in our multi-religious commitment to the city of Minneapolis. I feel honored to speak from the pulpit at The Basilica on Good Friday. Having a Rabbi speak at a Catholic Church during the Tenebrae service, which has been historically a time of conflict, turns it into a time of historic healing and a courageous act. We at Temple feel a great sense of pride at our friendship with your iconic Basilica. Thank you for welcoming us into your home. And thank you for what The Basilica has done for our city and interfaith dialogue.

— RABBI MARCIA ZIMMERMAN
Temple Israel

CONGRATULATIONS to The Basilica of Saint Mary on reaching the significant milestone of 150 years of ministry in Minneapolis. The Basilica’s leadership among Roman Catholics and in the broader community has been enormously important. The Basilica has participated faithfully in ecumenical projects in Minneapolis for decades. More recently The Basilica has helped animate interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the city. Minneapolis needs a strong Basilica; as one of your urban partners, Westminster is thrilled that at 150 years you are as vital as ever! May God continue to bless your ministry for generations to come.

— REV. DR. TIM HART ANDERSEN
Westminster Presbyterian Church

AS WITH OUR PATRIARCH Abraham’s tent, The Basilica is open to all for spiritual and physical nourishment. As a neighbor in geography and history we are proud to partner in the spirit of the Nostra Aetate and with the Transfer of Memory exhibit. As Pope Francis says: “Life is a journey.” Thank you for helping our entire community along the way and looking forward to the next 150 years working with the wonderful Basilica family — Mazel Tov!

— STEVE HUNEGS
Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas

SAINT MARK’S EPISCOPAL Cathedral proudly engages with The Basilica at a number of fruitful and life-giving levels. The Basilica’s direct service work is a wonderful blessing to the community, and we proudly share a commitment to advocacy and public policy to address root causes of large-scale, chronic human need. The Basilica’s efforts to be a beacon of faithful service in a hurting world are admirable, and we wish you ongoing success in continuing to change lives for people in Minneapolis and beyond.

— THE VERY REV. PAUL J. LEBENS-ENGLUND
Saint Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral

JESUS SAID, “Love your neighbors!” And we do! It is with great love and thanksgiving that the people of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church celebrate that for 150 years your congregation has demonstrated your love for God and this neighborhood by being a beacon of justice and joy for the City of Minneapolis and beyond.

You truly live out your calling to be light and a blessing to all peoples with passion and heart. In you, we see the face of God. We give God thanks for your enduring witness as you show us what God can do when people love with extravagant generosity and radical hospitality that looks and feels just like Jesus. We pray that God will continue to bless us as we are neighbors together, serving side by side bringing hope and joy to all generations. May your next 150 years be as fruitful and faithful as ever.

— REV. JUDY ZABEL
Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
Dear Johan,

I attended your Mass with the “Procession of the Icons.” It was beautiful but why do you do it? And what exactly are icons?

Gentle Reader,

An icon is a sacred image of a holy figure such as Jesus and Mary, Angels, and Saints. It is typically painted on wood using a proto-type or a traditional representation that has been handed down from generation to generation. Icons are venerated and used as a devotional aid in the Eastern Churches and more recently in the Churches in the West as well.

Traditional icons are stylized. They appear somewhat unnatural and at times even seem awkward. The reason for this is that icons depict the spiritual essence or heavenly presence of the Saints and not the natural form of their earthly body.

The main goal of icons is to connect us with the life of the Saints and to bring the depicted Saints into our places of worship and our everyday lives. Their visible representation is believed to evoke their invisible presence among us. This in turn makes communion possible between the members of the Body of Christ on Earth and the glorified members of the Body of Christ in Heaven.

During the month of November, when we celebrate all Saints and all souls we surround ourselves with these sacred icons so as to immerse ourselves in the sacred presence of all those depicted in the icons.

Dear Johan,

This may seem like a strange question but does one “write” an icon or “paint” an icon?

Gentle Reader,

Your question reminds me of a dinner I enjoyed years ago with some scholars in Orthodox liturgy. Among them was one of my illustrious university professors. During the course of the meal someone mentioned he had recently finished “writing” a new icon. My professor became very agitated and exclaimed that those who insist that one “writes” an icon fall victim to “affected nonsense.” Everyone fell silent after that, especially the one accused of promoting “affected nonsense.”

The root of this misunderstanding lies in a lack of linguistic knowledge. The Greek word “graphein” is almost exclusively translated as “to write.” However, depending on the context, the word can have different meanings. And though in Greek one and the same word is used, in English there are different verbs for the different acts referred to by the Greek word “graphein.”

Photography, e.g. is not the art of “writing” photos but rather the art of “taking” or “developing” photos. Cartography is not the art of “writing” maps but rather the art of “drawing” maps. Cinematography is not the art of “writing” movies but rather of “filming movies.” Similarly, iconography is not the art of “writing” icons but rather the art of “painting” icons. In each of these cases the Greek word “graphein” is translated differently relative to the actual act of creating: taking, drawing, filming, painting. Graphein is properly translated as writing when the act of writing happens such as in biography and hagiography. Although in modern times these texts were probably typed rather than written.

Some people have argued for the use of the misnomer of “writing icons” based on the fact that an icon is the Gospel in paint and because the Gospel is written so are the icons. Again, drawing on the wisdom of my former professor this kind of theologization is “affected nonsense.”

In short, an icon is painted, not written.

Johan M.J. van Parys, Ph.D., has been The Basilica’s director of liturgy and sacred arts since 1995.
2018 Cities 97 Basilica Block Party
FRIDAY, JULY 7 & SATURDAY JULY 8

Thank you to the fans and sponsors for making the 24th annual Basilica Block Party a success.
Live auction in action
2 Jennifer Rajkumar and Kathryn Nelson
3 Navin Mahavijiyan and Malobi Achike
4 Elizabeth Connor, Children’s Choir
5 Emily and Xander Broeffle and Karla and Rick Edin
6 Jim and Mary Jetland
7 Michael and Kim Dady
8 Michael Link and Amanda Bischoff

Thank you to Jennifer and Roshan Rajkumar for chairing the event.
Christmas Eve  
**Monday, December 24**
- 3:00pm Vigil Eucharist
- 5:30pm Vigil Eucharist
- 8:00pm Vigil Eucharist
- 11:00pm Choral Prelude Music
- 11:30pm Vigil of Lights
- Midnight Solemn Eucharist

Christmas Day  
**Tuesday, December 25**
- 7:30am Eucharist at Dawn
- 9:30am Solemn Eucharist
- Noon Solemn Eucharist
- 4:30pm Festive Eucharist
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Lower level of Alcuin Library

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Guests are able to view 28 original folios from various volumes of *The Saint John's Bible* with exhibition themes changing throughout the year. Manuscripts and rare books from HMML's collections accompany each exhibition.

A full-sized, high-definition, digital version of the Bible allows guests to electronically turn the pages of every volume of *The Saint John's Bible* and explore details, videos and content behind each page.

The gallery accommodates groups of up to 50 guests at a time, and exhibitions are designed for self-guided tours. Docent-led tours and programs are available only by appointment for groups of ten or more guests. To arrange for a tour, please contact the Director of *The Saint John's Bible* and HMML Programming, Tim Ternes at 320-363-3351 or tternes@csbsju.edu.

www.saintjohnsbible.org

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HMML’s exhibitions change every four to five months.

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The Basilica Landmark’s Mission is to preserve, restore, and advance the historic Basilica of Saint Mary for all generations.

The Basilica of Saint Mary is a community rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As disciples of Jesus Christ we:
• Practice biblical stewardship
• Share our faith with others in word and deed
• Pursue ecumenical and interfaith relationships
• Extend Christian hospitality, and
• Rejoice in rich diversity.

As Co-Cathedral of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis we are committed to provide:
• Inspiring liturgies and sacred arts
• Transforming life-long learning opportunities
• Engaging service to one another and justice for all.