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ONE of the things I find most beautiful about the Catholic faith is its universality—a church for all people. I think about this a lot in context of Marian apparitions and how Mary has revealed herself to people all over the world, even in remote regions, to provide her care and protection and point us to her son, Jesus.

Two of these notable apparitions—Our Lady of La Vang and Our Lady of Guadalupe—are commemorated in statues in the Basilica’s sanctuary. Mary is always depicted in the clothing that would make sense in each specific cultural context, which creates a sort of visual metaphor for the idea that she is a mother to all of us, regardless of nationality, race, or ethnicity.

This is just one example of how the sacred arts have the power to draw us deeper into the mystery of faith and increase our understanding of how we are meant to treat each other as followers of Christ. At The Basilica, no matter where you look, your eyes will surely rest upon a gorgeous piece of art with layers of symbolism to help inspire contemplation, prayer and faith.

In the last two years, staff and volunteers at The Basilica have challenged themselves to deepen their understanding of racism in the United States and increase their advocacy for racial justice. One way that The Basilica has accomplished this is by doing what we do best: using art as an entry point for tough conversations. Within these pages, you’ll read about the Seven Fates program that harnessed the sacred arts for critical conversations about race, as well as reading and journaling The Basilica staff did to challenge and interrogate their own beliefs about race.

I hope these pages provide inspiration to use the sacred arts to spark reflection and growth in your own faith journey.

— Rachel Newman Hogness
ONE One of my favorite movies is a 1983 film entitled “Tender Mercies.” The movie stars Robert Duvall as Mac Sledge, an alcoholic country music singer/songwriter who, after going on a bender, wakes up in a small town in rural Texas. There he (slowly) turns his life around as he develops a relationship with a young widow and her son. In one scene he has written a song that had been rejected by his former wife, a country western singer. He fumes over why the rejection of his song bothers him so much. Tess Harper, who plays the widow, looks at him and says: “You know I love you.” She pauses for a few seconds before continuing: “Every night when I say my prayers and thank the Lord for His Blessings and Tender Mercies toward me, you and Sonny head the list.”

I love the phrase “God’s Tender Mercies.” For me they are powerful words that speak of the gifts, grace, and blessings God has bestowed on me throughout my life. These gifts, grace, and blessings are unearned, unmerited, and sometimes (at least initially) they are unrecognized and unappreciated, but they are real and they have enriched my life beyond measure.

As I come to the end of my time as pastor of The Basilica, I have come to realize in my prayer that the parishioners and staff at The Basilica have been God’s Tender Mercies toward me these past fifteen years.

In ways too numerous to mention I have experienced God’s grace and blessings through the people of The Basilica’s goodness to me. For this I am enormously grateful; because of this I have been greatly blessed.

In regard to the future, as a Christian and a priest, I am compelled to believe in a future full of hope. As we read in the book of Lamentations. “…But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the LORD are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.” (Lam 3:21-23)

What the future will bring I don’t know, but I do believe that even when I might not be aware of it, I will be held firm in the embrace of God’s love, and that God’s favor and grace are never spent.

While I will truly miss the people of The Basilica, I take with me the precious memories of my time as pastor here. With but rare exceptions, I have always felt people’s support, encouragement, and prayers. These have been a great gift for me. I thank you for this gift.

Most importantly, though, as I complete my time as pastor of The Basilica, I want to thank you for being God’s Tender Mercies to me. ✝

— Fr. John Bauer
This summer will mark a transitional milestone for The Basilica of Saint Mary. Fr. Bauer, who has led the parish over the past fifteen years, ends his tenure as pastor this summer, and we will welcome Fr. Daniel Griffith to The Basilica in July.

On behalf of The Landmark Board, I want to express our immense gratitude to Fr. Bauer for his extraordinary leadership, his remarkable warmth and wisdom, and his always uplifting good humor. On a personal note, I have had the honor of working closely with Fr. Bauer these last several years and I am deeply grateful for his kindness and friendship and, importantly, his enduring patience. The Board wishes Fr. Bauer great happiness as he embarks on his next chapter.

In May, the Landmark Spark gala returned to its in-person format along with an online auction. We were able to raise much-needed funds to realize The Landmark’s mission to preserve, restore and advance The Basilica of Saint Mary for all generations. To all those who participated and generously supported this vibrant event, I share the sincere gratitude of the Landmark Board.

If you were unable to participate in Landmark Spark 2022, there is still time to make an impact. Please consider making a gift to this year’s Fund-A-Need project, dedicated to improving lighting on our campus and replacing 15 lampposts throughout the grounds. The new streetlights are an “old meets new” design: a fluted aluminum pole with a decorative base and a lantern luminaire that will evoke The Basilica’s history. These LED fixtures are efficient and make for a safer campus environment at night. You can help us “light the night” at basilicalandmark.org/FAN.

Next year’s Landmark Spark will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of The Basilica Landmark, originally known as The Friends of the Basilica. It will be a wonderful opportunity to mark the transformative projects that The Basilica Landmark has made possible. The Basilica Landmark has invested more than $11 million to preserve our historic buildings and campus in just the past ten years alone. We will share more details about Landmark Spark 2023 in the coming months.

Lastly, The Basilica Block Party, our annual fundraiser and the largest music festival held in Minneapolis, is also experiencing a time of transition. This popular event raises essential funds for the structural restoration of The Basilica. It began in 1995 and has been held every summer on the grounds of the Basilica of Saint Mary until 2020, when it was forced to cancel due to Covid-19. This summer, the Basilica Block Party is taking a planned one-year hiatus to reimagine the event for future years. We are in the process of rethinking every aspect of the event and how to make it better. The results of this work will be shared later in the year.

As we navigate the many changes occurring in our community, one thing is certain: the faith that connects us will continue to move The Basilica of Saint Mary with great hope and profound joy. I am excited for what lies ahead and thank you for being an important part of the job.

My sincere thanks to all our donors who have generously supported The Basilica Landmark. It was lovely to see many of you at the Landmark Spark.

— Mary McMahon, President of The Basilica Landmark
A Call for Community & Connection

The evolution of the St. Vincent de Paul Ministry

FOR decades The Basilica’s St. Vincent de Paul Ministry has provided a valuable arc of programs designed to support those experiencing homelessness. Much of the ministry’s success has come from the generosity of parishioners’ donations and volunteering.

The Basilica plays a significant role in the community; therefore how it chooses to respond to homelessness is critical, and there has been a concerted effort to evaluate the programs’ impact as community needs change. This exercise began before the pandemic started as part of the latest strategic plan with a lens focused on homelessness and continues today.

In response to the strategic plan’s invitation to prioritize supporting those experiencing homelessness, The Basilica asked key questions, worked with community partners, and challenged its own paradigms. This reflection led to reimagined programs: sustainable and intentional ministries that meet both the needs of those in the community as well as volunteers who want to engage; ministries designed to empower people to make life changes and that truly make a difference to end homelessness. This meant ending some long-supported programs, modifying others, and embarking on a few new ones.

When all existing St. Vincent de Paul programs paused at the start of the pandemic, it was an opportunity to reach out to those with lived experiences of homelessness about the greatest needs in that community. The answer was a resounding one: people are looking for connection and relationship with others. The Basilica then
embarked on a path to provide an opportunity for those with lived experiences of homelessness and other community members and parishioners to come together; a ministry that could help build relationships across the differences that benefits all and changes ministry from transactional to transformational. Several new Saturday ministries under the St. Vincent de Paul umbrella have come from this including the Platter of Wellness Series and Ministry Packing Events.

The Platter of Wellness Series began in February and focuses on holistic wellness. Sessions include topics like journaling, art, meditation, body movement, and nutrition and were led by experts from the community. It was so well received by everyone—from parishioners to those currently living in shelters to those with past experiences of homelessness—that the series will be expanded in the coming months for longer sessions on existing topics as well as the addition of new topics. More than just a resource for incorporating wellness practices into everyday life, the format of the ministry itself provides the backdrop for conversation and connection among participants.

The Ministry Packing Events are easy Saturday volunteer opportunities to work side by side with fellow parishioners and community members to create tangible results like winter clothing packs for homeless shelters, art and journaling kits for youth in family shelters, and cleaning supply kits for family shelters. Many times, those who will be receiving the materials are part of the packing process—which promotes community building while providing essential items to those in need. This ministry was purposefully designed to be a simple but impactful experience accessible to all.

Continued
Programs that have changed include the Shoe Ministry and Families Moving Forward. While shoe vouchers are no longer part of the Saturday morning offering as they have been for many years, The Basilica will be supporting Good in the ‘Hood Shoe Away Hunger Program to provide affordable work footwear to those in need. The Basilica will also no longer house families on its campus as part of the Families Moving Forward program. Most family shelters had already moved out of Hennepin County and into surrounding counties before the start of the pandemic. During the pandemic, those shelters moved families into hotels, and The Basilica supported them throughout with meals. While there will not be families living directly on The Basilica campus in the future, The Basilica will support its neighboring church, Plymouth Congregational, as they transition several families from hotels into their campus. Changes to the Shoe Ministry and Families Moving Forward stem from the shifting needs within the community as well as opportunities for The Basilica to partner with other resources already providing specific support so that The Basilica can focus on other unique programs within its own ministry.

When asked to share her outlook on the St. Vincent de Paul Ministry, Janice Andersen — The Basilica Director of Christian Life — expressed, “I’m humbled at the response and incredibly hopeful and excited. I see the energy and commitment of parishioners; I see the neighborhood engaging with us. We’ll continue to learn from the community. Mutuality and solidarity are at the heart of the ministries.”

As the programs continue to evolve, The Basilica is rooted not only in listening to the community, but also in listening to what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do with, through and alongside our neighbors. All are encouraged to participate in this dialogue. Please contact Janice Andersen at jandersen@mary.org to learn more, share in the planning process, or provide resources.

Elyse Rethlake is a parishioner and a volunteer BASILICA photographer.
In early 2022, Fr. Bauer asked Susan Link if she would be willing to accept an appointment as one of our parish trustees. Kathy Noecker, who had served as one of our parish trustees for over six years, had decided to retire from this position at the end of her term. Our entire parish community is extremely grateful to Kathy for her years of service and to Susan for her willingness to take on this responsibility. Susan will serve with Tom Paul, our other parish trustee.

The role of trustee is critical to The Basilica, providing prudent counsel to the Pastor and Parish Council. In the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, each parish is an individual corporation. Two members of each parish join the Pastor, the Vicar General, and the Archbishop as officers of the corporate board. In addition to their responsibilities as members of the corporate board, the trustees are members of the Parish Council and Finance Committee. They also sit on the Board of Directors for The Basilica Landmark.

Tell us a little about your background and why you agreed to serve as a trustee for The Basilica?

I am truly honored to have been asked to serve as a trustee for The Basilica of Saint Mary. My family and I have been members of The Basilica for over 15 years. During that time, we have celebrated three Confirmations, and recently, our first family wedding in this wonderful parish. I also have had the opportunity to work with The Basilica Landmark in several capacities over the years. I have come to know The Basilica as a truly unique community, with many generous, dedicated, and inspiring leaders and parishioners who bring the mission of our Church to life. I hope to be able to contribute to that mission in my role as trustee.

Currently, I am an attorney practicing as a partner in the Trusts and Estates group with Maslon LLP, and serve as Program Director for the Minnesota Wills for Heroes program.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities for The Basilica looking ahead?

I believe The Basilica is uniquely positioned to promote Christ’s message of love and hope, nourishing the spirituality of those we serve, caring for and unifying our community, and being a leader within the City of Minneapolis. This is reflected in the mission and Strategic Plan of The Basilica. The Basilica prides itself on being welcoming and inviting, and works diligently to promote inclusiveness within and outside its doors. The Basilica’s messages of faith and hope are supported by its focus on spirituality and inspiration through the arts. And The Basilica is a light of compassion and outreach, as well as an advocate for change, for our community, including those of our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

Conversely, what do you see as our parish’s greatest challenges?

With this unique position of leadership in pastoral and community care comes a great deal of responsibility. As parish leaders, we need to create an environment for growth of the parish, continually inviting more to join our community and share its special gifts, inviting more people to be engaged in The Basilica’s mission and programs, and promoting changes in our community consistent with our values. This will require thoughtful and diligent work. Fortunately, I think we have the strong leadership to make The Basilica a continuing pillar for the community for many years to come.

You’ll be starting your service as a trustee just as Fr. Bauer leaves for another parish and The Basilica welcomes a new pastor. Do you see any unique challenges in that process?

I am very grateful to Fr. Bauer for his years of leadership, inspiration, and friendship. We owe him much, and pray for him as he begins the next part of his life’s journey. I am excited to welcome and work with Fr. Daniel and hope to support him in the next chapter for The Basilica and our faith community.
This spring we celebrated Fr. John Bauer’s time with us as he departs The Basilica of Saint Mary to become pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Minneapolis.

Fr. Bauer became pastor and rector of The Basilica in 2007, succeeding Michael O’Connell. I sat down with Fr. Bauer to reflect on his time at The Basilica.
FIRST, I wanted to ask whether you knew that the Bauer family brought me into the Catholic Church! Fr. John Bauer at Immaculate Conception Parish in Watertown, Minnesota, baptized me. It’s been a pleasure to work with you as an adult.

That was my uncle Fr. John T. Bauer. There are three of us who have been John Bauers [and priests] — John T., my uncle; I’m John M.; and I have a cousin John J. Bauer who is pastor at the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Minnetonka.

Wow!

You shared with me that you wanted to talk about two things in our interview today: what is unique about The Basilica, and the future of The Basilica. When you think about The Basilica, what is most unique to you?

The Basilica is one of those places that reminds me of James Joyce’s definition of church: “Here comes everyone.” We have everyone here: people who are on their way out of church, people who are on their way back in… people who are trying to find a relationship with the Church, and they all feel that this is their home.

There’s a uniqueness about the welcoming spirit at The Basilica. Everyone comes for their own reason — for the music, for the Saint Vincent de Paul outreach… And people respect that fact. You and I may not be there for the same reason, but we’re there together.

I certainly felt that as a new parishioner here. At the start of Mass, you often say “wherever you are on your faith journey, you’re welcome here.” Is that something you started here at The Basilica?

That is something I started at The Basilica because I realized how unique we are as a parish. People come here from all over the Twin Cities area and are welcome.

The parish has undertaken major planning efforts in the last few years — the Campus Master Plan and the Strategic Plan. What do you see when you envision the The Basilica in the future?

First, I’m very excited that Fr. Dan Griffith is coming. I think he’ll be able to lead The Basilica into a future full of hope. So many people put so much effort into our Master Plan, and when COVID hit, everything was put on hold. It’s time now to get back on track and look toward the future.

"Wherever you are in your faith journey" was your inclusive and welcoming invitation to all of us in each celebration of the Mass. It is also a perfect reflection of your kind and open manner as our Pastor for 14 years. Thanks for such a mantra and your servant leadership… Peace be with you.”

— CHIP BRINK

"I will miss you, Father Bauer, and your smile, warm heart, down to earth homilies and your beautiful voice. I wish you all the best in your new parish!"

— MARJORIE MOODY
With our strategic plan, we’ve set some benchmarks for ourselves. How do we be more welcoming? How do we respond more to the needs of those experiencing homelessness? How do we be more inclusive? How do we make the arts accessible to everyone? And that’s exciting.

I think the future at The Basilica is very bright, with lots of possibilities. We are a beacon of hope on the Minneapolis skyline.

I agree, and I think a great deal of that is due to your leadership and the efforts you’ve supported during your time here.

[Laugh] Well, I would love to take all the credit in the world, but I have learned that it’s the leadership of the parish over the years — Parish Council, The Basilica Landmark Board — people have been really visionary in terms of what they see as important for our community to focus on. While I’d love to take credit, I have to share it with a lot of other people!
What is the biggest thing you’ve learned in your time here?

The thing I really learned is how good people can be. My one regret is that I’ve not told people often enough how good they are. I’ve seen people step up to the plate and help other people in need….

For example, let’s not just do this, but this! [gesturing with wide open arms] Let’s make it much broader and much bigger!

The goodness of people is what has always impressed me here at The Basilica. And I haven’t said it often enough.

What is a funny memory from your time here?

Ah… [Chuckling]

If you can say on the record….

Yes! At one point we needed to replace all the bathrooms in the parish school. There was a wonderful couple, now since passed, and every year we’d go out for dinner, and they’d ask “Where’s the need?” Now, asking for money for bathrooms is not the easiest thing in the world, and I suspect our Development Director had cued them up a little bit, as they asked, “Where is the need?” and I said, “Well, this year it’s a little unusual, but we need money for all the bathrooms in the school.” He looked at his wife and winked, and said, “Well, there would be one stipulation… we’d have to call them ‘Fr. John’s Johns!’”

My lasting legacy… [Laughing]

Continued

“Fr. Bauer has been diligent in ensuring that our Parish is a place where ‘All are Welcome’. His presence will be missed but his impact on each of us will live on.”

—TOM PAUL
“We thank you Fr. Bauer for all that he had done for the parish. He will be missed and we are grateful to have him over the years. We wish him well on his next endeavor.”

— MY LAM

What would you say is the biggest challenge you’ve faced during your time as pastor here?

There were a variety of challenges along the way. The recession hit in 2007-2008 when I first got here. Then we had the marriage amendment issue, which was difficult for everyone. Then we had the Vikings Stadium…. So there have been various issues and challenges along the way. But the wonderful thing was that I was never facing them alone. Our leadership is just spectacular. They did a wonderful job of helping me to say, “Okay, this is what we need to do.”

I can say for my own part, having served on the Parish Council here, you have been wonderful at inviting that input and feedback, and encouraging collaborative decision-making. I think that is a wonderful leadership trait that you have.

Thank you.

COVID has been the other huge challenge these last two years. Making the decision to close The Basilica, I think that was the biggest challenge. When COVID hit, we had to decide within a week. I still remember having the whole Parish Council and Finance Committee on a screen, and we had this discussion. It was clear: we needed to close. I thought to myself, “Wow, closing The Basilica, who would have thought?”

You have been a calm presence in the face of everything The Basilica parish and the larger Church have faced these past 15 years. Thank you for your dedication to the parish, sense of humor and grace under pressure. Paraphrasing your now famous welcome at Mass, ‘Wherever you are in your priestly journey, we welcome you’ (back).”

— BOB KLEIBER

Is there anything you want to say to the parish community through this interview?

Yes, as I mentioned before, I wish I had told them more often how good they are.

My last question is, will you come back and visit once in a while?

As pastor I was blessed to be a part of the community, and now somebody else is going to be pastor. That new pastor role belongs to Fr. Griffith. So as pastor, no. But socially, yes! I’m always up for a good party! [Laughing]

Katelin Richter Davis is past Chair of the Parish Council at The Basilica.
WALKING WITH YOU
The Basilica’s prophetic witness

Greetings to The Basilica community!

I look forward to soon being with you as we walk together in the light of the risen Lord. I want to congratulate Fr. John Bauer on the successes of his pastorate at The Basilica and shepherding well this fine community of faith over the past several years. Fr. Bauer has been exceedingly gracious and helpful as we have prepared for the transition of pastoral leadership, and I know he holds this community very close to his heart.

I have been so impressed with the commitment and talent of parish leaders I have met thus far. They have been a source of inspiration for me as I continue the process of listening and learning, so I can effectively serve The Basilica community as your next pastor. Indeed, I am humbled and honored by Archbishop Hebda’s appointment as pastor of The Basilica and look forward to our shared journey of faith.

During the past several years, some of my scholarly work at the St. Thomas law school and pastoral work as a priest, has focused on responding to the harm of clergy abuse and leadership failures through restorative justice. Restorative justice seeks to respond to harm by promoting healing for victim-survivors and accountability for those who have caused harm. In the many conferences I have attended on this important topic over the last several years, the focus often comes back to Church culture.

Many have rightly, and with dismay, pointed to a culture in the Catholic Church which is often too closed and clerical, thus inhibiting light and wisdom. In its place, some leaders, including at the Catholic Leadership Roundtable, have called for a new Church model of Co-Responsibility, where laity and clergy work and walk together for the good of the Church. As I told a group of conference attendees in San Antonio earlier this spring, this has been the prophetic witness of The Basilica of Saint Mary for more than a quarter century. And, as you all know, this model works!

Thank you for your prophetic witness for the good of the Church. I look forward to walking with you in tandem soon as we follow the path of our savior, Jesus Christ.

— Fr. Daniel Griffith

JOIN US FOR FR. GRIFFITH’S INSTALLATION WEEKEND

Saturday, August 13 at 5:00 PM
Installation Mass with Archbishop Hebda
Reception following Mass

Sunday, August 14
Receptions following 9:30 and 11:30 AM Mass
Welcome

New Basilica staff members

YOU may have seen (and heard) a new musician at our organ console: Samuel Holmberg began as The Basilica’s Organist and Liturgical Music Associate in September 2021. He also directs the Missa Choralis Series and Chorus Cantorum at The Basilica.

A graduate of The Eastman School of Music (M.M.) and Luther College (B.A.), he holds degrees in organ performance, literature, and sacred music. His principal teachers include David Higgs, William Porter, Gregory Peterson, and Lynn Trapp. While at Eastman, Sam studied improvisation and repertoire with visiting professors Michel Bouvard, organ professor at the Paris Conservatoire and organist at the Basilique Saint-Sernin in Toulouse and the Royal Chapel at the Palace of Versailles, and Edoardo Bellotti, organ and improvisation professor at the Musikhochschule of Trossingen, Germany, and harpsichord and continuo professor at the Accademia Santa Cecilia of Bergamo, Italy. He also served as a co-chair of the Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative (EROI), a global center for organ performance, research, building, and preservation, and participated in an undergraduate program at the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music. Sam was a sacred music intern at the Cathedral of Saint Paul in Minnesota and, for the past six years, was Director of Sacred Music at St. Peter Cathedral in Marquette, Michigan.
Holmberg felt a calling to music. At about age three, he started as a chorister at his family’s parish, St. Therese in Deephaven, Minnesota, and always took piano. In about seventh grade, St. Therese installed a new instrument. Sam attended an organ demonstration event where the director, Rob Glover, invited him to play something and, he says, “that was that.”

Even with the many locations which playing the organ has taken Sam, he feels “so excited to be returning home” to The Basilica. “I’ve been to The Basilica so many times throughout the years, and it really has been a second spiritual home for me,” he explains. “So it’s a thrill to be back, to be here, and to be part of the amazing musical history and tradition here.”

Sam and his wife, Kelsey, met at Luther College despite both growing up in the southwest Twin Cities area. “It took going three hours away to meet, but our families live fifteen minutes apart in the Cities,” he explains with a chuckle. They have two daughters, Abigail and Eleanor, ages 4½ and 2, and Abby has already joined him on the organ bench. In their family time, they love to do anything outdoors: hiking, exploring new places and new cities. Kelsey is also a marathon runner, which he proudly finds “so unbelievable, that she can do those things!”

What are his impressions after his first Christmas and Easter seasons at The Basilica? “I was overjoyed to experience both Easter and Christmas at The Basilica,” he enthuses. “The sonic splendor of The Basilica Brass Ensemble added great festivity and rejoicing to Easter, while the strings captured the mystery and awe of the Nativity. In particular, after the past two years, this music was all the more meaningful as we celebrated these central mysteries of our faith with a full Basilica again.”

Lori Gerhardson
Lori Gerhardson (left) joined The Basilica staff in May 2022 as the Development Communications and Events Assistant. Previously, Lori was a technical writer and most recently a Tech Support Paraprofessional for the Bloomington Public Schools. She enjoys scrapbooking, cardmaking, sewing, fishing, and making and enjoying music.

Shannon Luckert
Shannon Luckert joined The Basilica staff in April 2022 as the Development Research Coordinator. A Milwaukee-native and Uptown resident, Shannon has worked for the United Way, Augsburg University, Twin Cities PBS, Blake School, and, most recently, Minnehaha Academy. She is a dedicated audience member for local theater and film and loves to bake pie.

Tomy Vettukallel
Tomy Vettukallel joined The Basilica staff in April 2022 as the Associate Coordinator of Liturgical Celebrations. Originally from Southern California, he moved to the Twin Cities recently and just finished his first year at the University of St. Thomas Law School. He graduated from the University of San Diego with a Bachelor’s Degree in business, and then spent a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps volunteering at the New Orleans Public Defender’s Office. In San Diego, Tomy was the chapel coordinator for the student chapel, Founders Chapel. He is, “looking forward to becoming more acquainted with the Twin Cities and the wonderful community at The Basilica.”

Melissa Streit is the Director of Engagement and has been an active volunteer and parish member since 1996.
Since the 2020 murder of George Floyd, staff and parishioners at The Basilica have been searching for ways to educate and engage the parish community in discussions about racial injustice in Minnesota and the world at large.

Recently, the staff developed a program called “The Seven Fates: Racial Healing Stations” to engage with these topics through the arts. This program is intended to provide a new point of entry into these conversations via visual arts, music, written word and prayer.

“We know that the arts are a way of bringing people together and helping people to learn things in a very different way,” said Janet Grove, of the Christian Life and Liturgy departments.

Sarah Bellamy of Penumbra Theatre provided the inspiration for the program with an essay she wrote entitled “The Eight Fates of George Floyd.” This essay explored the confluence of factors that contribute to racial inequality in America and led to Floyd’s tragic end – from maternal health to poverty to police violence. Bellamy’s original piece listed poverty twice to emphasize its importance in Floyd’s story, but for the purpose of this program, Basilica staff decided to consolidate the eight fates into seven.

Each fate also included challenging statistics about the disparities Black Americans face with regard to poverty, health outcomes (including maternal health, chronic health, addiction and Covid-19), and police brutality.

“Listening to these statistics can be eye-opening,” Grove explained. “They include things people don’t tend to think about, like how so few therapists are Black, for example. If you’re someone who is Black and struggling with mental health issues, how do you go about finding a therapist who looks like you and can understand what you’re going through?”
Voices from participants

WITH Bellamy’s work providing a framework, the team at The Basilica brought the program to life with artwork, music and prayer to fully engage attendees’ hearts and minds in the issues at hand.

“We are known for our beautiful artwork — our collection of art, our galleries, our showing of art from all cultures and all means and everything,” Grove said. “So we knew we wanted this to have a piece of art that would go with each of these healing stations. We then looked at The Basilica’s music.”

Johan van Parys, Director of Liturgy and Sacred Arts, selected a piece of art for each station and wrote an explanation of each piece.

“It wasn’t enough to just look at the work of art,” Grove said. “We needed Johan’s understanding of where this piece comes from and where it fits in with the fates we were discussing.”

Walter Tambor, Contemporary and World music Leader, selected the music, looking specifically at opportunities for a male vocalist and a female vocalist and spaces for congregational singing.

“We were intentional about the order of each element of the program: the art, the fate, the music, and the prayer,” Grove said. “Listening to the fate is so difficult in so many ways that it was good to provide an opportunity to just sit back and listen to a beautiful piece of music and allow each participant to rise up from that.”

Each Racial Healing Station concluded with a prayer, some with a call and response for BIPOC attendees and White allies.

“What does The Basilica do well? We pray.” Grove said.

The staff discussed whether they should write the prayers, but found that it was important to highlight the work of a Black writer since much of the program’s content focused on issues affecting Black people. They discovered Cole Arthur Riley (colearthurriley.com) who publishes her prayers on her website and @blackliturgies on Instagram.

“She has an incredible website, this young Black woman. And we decided since this was so surrounding George Floyd and people who are Black, that we would keep it in that focus for this one,” Grove said. “I read probably hundreds of them and really looked to see which ones fit best with that particular fate, with that particular station.”

The stations concluded with a discussion session in Teresa of Calcutta Hall, where attendees could discuss next steps they could take to advance racial healing within their own lives, at The Basilica and within the larger community.

“We feel that it’s really important that it’s not enough to say ‘Oh, I stand with you,’ but then go back to your house and not turn on the TV when things are hard or not go out and walk in solidarity,” Grove said. “So we hope that this will offer people a range of things to get them started or to continue their process and give us next steps for our parish.”

One attendee provided the following feedback on how the Seven Fates impacted her: “Thank you so much for your hard work on creating this beautiful, consciousness-raising piece that moved my heart and mind with facts that are unbelievable and art and music to engage my sense and give my mind a break.”

Continued
1. Ancestral Trauma

FA TE: Research is tracking the ways that experiences during our lifetime—particularly traumatic ones—can have a very real impact on our families for generations to come. It shouldn’t be surprising that we develop genetic responses to threat and trauma. Trauma can reverberate down the generations in humans, influencing both our biology and our behavior.

Psychologist Dr. Errlanger Turner explains that “psychological symptoms such as anxiety, hyper-vigilance to threat, or lack of hopefulness regarding your future can occur due to repeated exposure to racism or discrimination.” For someone who experienced terrorism repeatedly during childhood, these symptoms would likely not present as episodic, they would become persistent.

PRAYER: God who answers, Would you who makes water burst forth from rock, remind us that you are a God who responds to our exhaustion and defeat? Just as you had Moses cling to an artifact of memory to meet the present moment, would you grant us physical artifacts which call us back to visceral emotions of our own stories, recalling how you have brought freedom and care to us before. Let us grasp the staffs of our past believing in their power even now—that we would be a people who meets desperation and sorrow with a remembrance that protects us from despair. Let our elders go with us to the rock, knowing they hold memory for us, increasing our belief and resolve. And as we approach the hopeless stone of our lives, let us meet the face of God, seeing that we aren’t standing in the traumatic memories of the past alone, but with the breaker of chains and maker of water in the wilderness. We have not been forgotten.
2. Maternal & Infant Health

**FATE:** Imagine adrenaline, cortisol, and norepinephrine surging through a pregnant woman’s system each time she is triggered, affecting the fetal environment as her baby’s nervous system is developing.

If she is a poor Black woman, the likelihood of these surges happening frequently was high. Maternal stress is associated with poor birth outcomes including preterm birth, infant mortality, and low birthweight.

**PRAYER:** A Black baby girl was born yesterday, who will tell her that it’s not true what they say about her? Come, let us swaddle her in the truth: It sounds like no one can give you freedom, your blood cannot be chained. It sounds like be gentle with yourself, we buried miracles in your bones.

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**SPRINKLE OF LIFE** by Charles Caldwell
3. Poverty

**FATE:** The highest poverty rate by race is found among Native Americans (25.4%), with Blacks (20.8%). Lines of race and class have created crushing parameters around even the most resilient people.

We shouldn’t be able to determine with such precision the quantity of years or the quality of life of a child born in a particular zip code, but we can. In some places in the country, like New Orleans, children born in neighborhoods just a few miles apart can have a 25-year difference in life expectancy. The systems and structures that govern much of Black life in the United States mean children are raised inside a crucible of racism and poverty.

Wealth in this country is unequally distributed by race— and particularly between white and Black households. African American families have a fraction of the wealth of white families, leaving them more economically insecure and with far fewer opportunities for economic mobility.

**PRAYER:** God of the cross, forgive us that sympathy which makes the pain of another more about our own offeelings than their reality. An evil vanity perverts our desire for justice and equity for the oppressed. Lord, we don’t need people to feel bad, we need those with inordinate power to relinquish I, becoming acquainted with the sorrows of those they’ve held down in the mud for so long. Let daily living undergo a holy metamorphosis, that no structure of injustice would go untouched as we interrogate our everyday systems and choice and comforts, and make right where there is wrong.

God, we thank you that you know our sorrows up close. That you did not attempt a rescue from afar but knew that there was no helping apart from becoming.
4. Chronic Health Conditions
(Due to Weathering Racism)

**FATE:** Data since the late 1990s in social epidemiology have shown that adverse health outcomes are linked to stress experienced due to racism: hypertension, stroke, heart disease, kidney disease, even certain cancers. Over time, the repeated activation of the stress response system takes a strenuous toll on the body. What’s more, these outcomes of weathering racism create the preconditions that seem to make Black and brown people more susceptible to Covid-19 today.

**PRAYER:** God who rests, it is difficult for us to imagine a Christ who, having all power and capacity to heal others, still at times walked away. Who napped unapologetically in the face of danger. Give us the courage to rest. The holy audacity to do absolutely nothing at all. And as we do, allow us to hold vigil for the tombs of this world while honoring that we are neither savior nor slave. Grant us a slowness that allows us to feel what hurts and makes healing possible. Let our rest be our liberation.
5. Addiction

FATE: Attention to the opioid crisis is fraught with racism. It has been framed as an urgent public health issue but prevention and treatment is focused disproportionately on white drug users, even though Black drug overdose deaths between 2015-2016 was up 40 percent compared to the overall population at 21 percent.

Black people struggling with opioid use disorders are not getting the treatment they need. Drug related offenses are more criminalized for Black users. Severe sentencing policies continue to disproportionately target Black populations, disrupting Black families and Black communities as people struggling with addiction are incarcerated rather than routed for treatment. Lack of diverse representation in physicians and clinicians who can prescribe treatment medications only exacerbates an already sensitive cultural divide.

PRAYER: Tender God, Some days our sadness feels too much to hold. It shackles us to our beds. It colonizes even our deepest joys. Would you hold it with us? Would you let our beds be our restoration and not our guilt? Keep us from speaking those secret words of self-hatred that demand that we carry our pain in some other way, that tell us to conquer sadness instead of feeling it. Help us to be weak. That holy weakness that doesn’t sneer at itself, but allows us to see that we are no less dignified because of our tears.

Help us to be tender with ourselves, patient with those wounds which we can’t seem to put words to. Guide us toward communities that don’t force us to explain our sadness or coerce us into expressing it in any particular way on any particular timeline. And as we do our best to live, grant us the resolve to care for our bodies. To use what strength we have to make small steps toward loving our bodies and minds best we can.
**6. Global Pandemic**

**FACE:** The Global Pandemic has hit people of color in the United States very hard. The Navajo Nation has been ravaged by the virus. In June 2020, the reservation had an infection rate of 3.4 percent and more than 6,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19. By comparison, at the same time New York state had an infection rate of 1.9 percent.

For Black Americans, due to the kinds of jobs they hold, they are at a much higher risk of contracting COVID-19 than the rest of the population. If they do contract it, they are also much more likely than White people to die from the disease.

**PRAYER:** Shelter God, Help us to trust the promise. There are times it feels like our present reality will always be. It becomes difficult to dream. Our imaginations for healing and health are far too small. Expand them, God, that we might grow the branches of hope into something we can cling onto without them buckling under the weight of our next tragedy. Let our dreaming be our rest, a shade from the heat of the evils of this world—that our alienation and oppression would not resign us to the wilderness.

Be who you say you are. If you are a stronghold, then keep the marginalized within the walls of your chest. If you are destroyer of the veil, come and let it fall from the eyes of those who do injustice and make death. And protect our dreaming, Lord, that as we wait for you, our hope would not be tarnished by our tears but renewed—sacred glints of light in the darkness.
FATE: One of the health risks associated with being Black and male is absolutely an encounter with the police, as we’ve seen again and again in city after city. Black parents of boys all shudder to see their sons’ baby arms and legs grow long and lanky, their feet and hands get bigger, their voices get deeper—they can directly correlate their growth with their vulnerability in the world; they will no longer be perceived as someone’s sweet and singular child, but instead cast as a threat, as a menace to a White society.

Between 1980 and 2018, nearly 31,000 Americans were killed by the police, with more than 17,000 of them going unaccounted for in the official statistics. Black Americans were 3.5 times as likely to be killed by the police as White Americans were, and Latinos and Native Americans also suffered higher rates of fatal police violence than White people.

PRAYER: God who remembers, They think we will forget. We cannot. Thank you for being a God who keeps account of every evil thing. A God who calls us toward habits of memory for both death and liberation. Forgive us for how we’ve discarded and diminished the evils of the past as some fractured end note in the book of American glory. Help us to remember all that made us, that the beneficiaries of injustice and exclusion would look in the mirror and be unable to perceive their reflection apart from those dark histories that have placed them in front of that particular mirror in that particular neighborhood.

Help us to remember those ancestors from whom this land was taken and those whose backs were broken to build up a fortune and society that would never embrace them. How long will the arms of death and injustice see themselves as heroes? It seems that whiteness alone can never be trusted to tell its own story. Have mercy and hand us the pen.

Closing Prayer from Stations of the Cross to Overcome Racism:

Loving God, you call us from every race and ethnicity to be one human family. Our nation has fallen far short of that goal. Too many of our brothers and sisters are ignored, ostracized, mistreated, and even killed because of the evil of racism. Too often, our own ways of thinking are infected by the messages of exclusion and marginalization around us.

Transform our hearts, renew our minds, and inspire our actions to effectively address and overcome racism in our day. Help us form new relationships, transform social structures, and reform public policies to establish justice for all. Then all of us will be able to approach you as one people, equal in our dignity, magnificent in our variety, and joyful in our unity, so that this world may be all that you intend it to be. AMEN
Dear Johan,

I have noticed that you hang art from the pulpit in The Basilica and change it on a regular basis. One of the docents mentioned that it was to encourage Visio Divina. I have no idea what that is. Can you explain?

Gentle Reader,

You are correct. We hang art from our pulpit and rotate it according to liturgical feasts and seasons. And yes, the docent was correct, we do this to engage people in Visio Divina both during and outside of the liturgy. This term may not be a familiar concept, but it is related to Lectio Divina. So, let’s start with the latter.

The ancient Christian practice of Lectio Divina or Divine Reading and Hearing, consists of the meditative receiving of Bible passages with the intent to change one’s own life in favor of Scripture values. This practice was very popular in monastic communities. The Rule of Saint Benedict prescribes this practice as essential to one’s spiritual life.

More recently the practice of meditating on visual images has been identified as Visio Divina or Divine Seeing. This form of meditation relies on the visual arts as a source of divine revelation which the viewer approaches in a meditative way to glean inspiration and insight.

Lectio Divina differs from Visio Divina in that the Bible, which is the object of meditation of the former, is divinely inspired and thus communicates divine truth and will directly. Sacred art, on the other hand is mostly understood as a human interpretation of the divine truth, revealed in sacred scripture but enlightened by two millennia of human experience. In a sense, sacred art then is not a ‘primary source’ but rather a ‘secondary source’ for the knowledge of God’s truth. In this way, sacred art can be compared to the homily or sermon, which is a textual interpretation of the Bible, with the intent to make the readings more accessible to 21st century Christians.

However, in some instances, sacred art is considered directly inspired by God. Orthodox Christians view Icons as inspired in a similar way as the writers of the Bible were divinely inspired. Because of that, Icons are venerated with as much respect as the Holy Bible.

The Church in the West does not have the same understanding. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church embraces sacred art as an “echo of the mystery of Creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has wished in some way to associate”1 artists. In other words, even though Christian art is not understood to be the direct result of Divine inspiration, there is a clear recognition of the fact that sacred artists connect with the creative power of God.

Over the past two millennia many great artists have given “vision” to our Scriptural narrative. As a result, the Catholic Church is the repository of an immense treasure of sacred art from all places and all times. Our age, too, has produced great sacred art. The Catholic Church indeed continues to be graced with artists who provide new materials for Visio Divina.

When you are in The Basilica, please allow for the Word proclaimed from the pulpit and the art hanging from the pulpit, to inspire you, to mold you more and more, into the image of Christ.

Johan M.J. van Parys, Ph.D., has been The Basilica’s director of liturgy and sacred arts since 1995.

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Dear Johan,

In a recent talk you referred to the making of Icons as “painting” Icons. Far is it from me to correct you, but are you not aware that Icons are not “painted” but are “written”?

Gentle Reader,

Like you, I used to proudly proclaim that Icons are “written” and would correct anyone claiming otherwise. That quickly changed when one of my illustrious professors in Orthodox Liturgy corrected me stating that he notion of “writing Icons” was an ignorant Western affectation. He went on to say that this is based on a limited understanding of the Greek language masked by poor theology.

The word Iconography comes from the Greek words ἰκών, meaning image, and γραφεῖν which is often just translated as “to write” but really has the more general meaning of “to create.” Grafein can be translated in many ways depending on the medium that is used. Photography, e.g., means the taking of pictures, not the writing of pictures; cartography means the drawing of maps, not the writing of maps; cinematography means the making of films, not the writing of films. Similarly, iconography refers to the painting of icons and not the writing of icons.

As far as the notion that both Icons and Bible texts are divinely inspired, that is correct. However, to argue that Icons therefore are written as the Bible was, is incorrect. ✌
Me, a White Supremacist?

A journal reflection

I chose a purple journal. Purple for the color of repentance. As it turned out, the daily journaling was the hardest part of this endeavor that a good number of Basilica staff had voluntarily undertaken together.

Through the work of The Basilica’s EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity) initiative, the staff has been challenged to commit time to EDI work. About a dozen staff members chose to read and discuss Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla F. Saad this past spring. We met four times, since the book was organized into four weeks of daily readings, and shared our thoughts, learnings, doubts, and past experiences with the utmost trust in each other.

If I only had to read the assigned section each week, it would have been difficult enough. Not the volume of pages, rather what was being presented was emotionally challenging. Honestly, it was a firehose of truth to grapple with.

But each daily reading within each week’s chapter also presented two to six journal questions for the reader to reflect on. Early on, in the first week, Saad challenged me in my “white exceptionalism” (meaning, “I’m not a racist, I’m one of the good ones”) to not skip the journaling work. She knew many readers would be tempted to just think about the questions, but not write out responses. And that’s where the rubber meets the road, as the saying goes.

When it’s just me, my pen, and my purple journal, I must dig deep and be honest. Be honest about my white privilege. Be honest about my white fragility. Be honest about my anti-Blackness. Be honest about my tone policing. Be honest about my white saviorism. Be honest about my racist stereotypes.

For me, the police murder of George Floyd was a shatter moment. To see George Floyd’s death captured on cell phone video and play out repeatedly for 9 minutes and 29 seconds was too much to bear. I couldn’t watch it all. I was shaken out of my white slumber and wide awake, electrified, along with so many in our city and cities around our world.
And what would I do now in response to this shatter moment? Some whites took to the streets in protest with leadership from groups like Black Lives Matter. Others were determined to become better allies—learning to yield to the experience of the Black community, to talk less and listen more in this time of racial reckoning. Some denied the crucial moment we were faced with and became defensive, retorting with All Lives Matter, or Blue Lives Matter. Some retreated into white apathy or white silence and did nothing. I looked for books and joined Facebook groups to learn as much as I could. I have a young Black son at home. His life matters.

This is personal work, this deep dive into antiracism. This is work for the white community to do. Each of us. As I seek to understand my own complicity in white supremacy, it is incredibly uncomfortable. Honestly, I’ve never been taught how to even have a conversation about race. I wasn’t educated about racism in our nation. I don’t have conversations about racism with anyone— with other white people, nor with People of Color—and certainly none that implicate my part in perpetuating it. I have very few People of Color in my life. Up to this point, I haven’t taken the time to find out about white supremacy—I had that term relegated off and reserved for extremist groups. No more. Now I realize it means me too.

As I look back at my childhood and teen years, Saad helped me realize I was never told the color of my skin would limit me in any way. Or that I would have to work doubly hard to prove myself because of it. Or that people would fear me before ever knowing me. In fact, the color of my skin was never once even discussed growing up because it was seen as the norm. It was the safe way to be born. That is the truth of my white upbringing. I think most BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) would not tell a story like that— but rather have very different stories of how color was addressed in their family of origin.

In this world we move around in, I’ve realized how much whiteness is centered as the norm. When I think about who I mix with, the stores I go to, the main characters in the movies, books, and podcasts I encounter, who I worship with, and the sheer number of people with white privilege holding leadership positions, I know it’s true. As I consider each of these areas, Saad challenged me to think about who is seen as the norm and who is seen as “other.”

White centering is so normal to me I haven’t even been aware of it. My challenge now is to stop upholding whiteness as the norm. Saad asserts, “None of us are born fully conscious of systems of oppression or our own privileges and unconscious biases. We are also not born aware of the historical contexts within which we hold identities of privilege or marginalization.” (p.164) She likens it to a fish not being aware of the water it swims in, or us not being aware of the air we breathe. But it is our job now to become fully conscious, to educate ourselves, and to become aware. And, she promises, once we become aware, once we begin to see something, we cannot unsee it.

This book is an important teacher for anyone wishing to understand the complex system of white supremacy, and our individual role in it, and for anyone who dreams of a more equitable world. It is written clearly and user-friendly. When taken seriously, it is life changing. I know that sounds dramatic, but I firmly believe it’s true. As Saad wisely puts it, “You cannot dismantle what you cannot see. You cannot challenge what you do not understand.” (p.38) This book helps the reader to both understand and begin to dismantle white supremacy. As you come to it, come with courage and with an open heart, and don’t forget your purple journal.

Wendy Cichanski Caduff joined The Basilica staff in 2018 as the Coordinator of Caring Ministries.
GRETCHEN Williams Jurek grew up in Minneapolis, was confirmed at The Basilica, and attended The Basilica School until the family moved to Idaho in 1949. Her family had deep roots in the parish. A small archival treasure traveled with the family to Utah, then to California, then back to a storage unit in Roseville, where it sat awaiting discovery. Tucked in with scrapbooks, photograph albums and bibles was a nearly pristine playbill for a Cathedral Choral Club performance in 1909 of Planquette’s comic operetta, “The Chimes of Normandy.” A few months after Gretchen passed away in March 2019, her husband Ron began going through the family boxes, expecting only books. He kindly scanned and then sent the original to me at The Basilica Archives.

For an archivist, this playbill is marvelous for so many reasons. First, I have a surprisingly small collection of parish materials before 1923. Second, the playbill documents the life of the parish community, and it does so with photographs of everyone involved. Third, it shows how interconnected the parish families were—Gretchen is related in some way to about a quarter of the cast members.

Dramatic clubs at Immaculate Conception date back at least to 1890. In 1901, the parish young men’s society, the Knights of the Cross, organized a social auxiliary group known as the Nabobs, who planned monthly entertainments, dances, and parties. In 1908, the Nabobs teamed up with the Young Ladies’ Sodality for a larger venture, the (Pro-) Cathedral Choral Club, which presented the operetta “Sylvia” as part of the school commencement and for...
several nights following. In the past, the teaching Sisters had the extra work of preparing a year-end student entertainment to raise funds for the tuition-free school. The young people of the parish sought to remove this burden, and their performance was a great success, both artistically and financially. The Club returned in 1909 with “Chimes of Normandy.”

“Chimes” was directed by Floyd M. Hutsell, locally famous for composing the University of Minnesota Rouser in 1909. The performance featured a mix of professional singers and parishioners in the lead roles, with the Immaculate Conception choir acting as the chorus.

The Choral Club presented one more operetta, “The Nautical Knot”, in 1910, then disbanded. Parish dramatics did continue under the auspices of the Dramatic Club of the League of Catholic Women and the Pro-Cathedral Seton and Amphion Clubs into the 1920s. But most of these shows were comedy plays or reviews; the day of the high production amateur operetta had passed for the Pro-Cathedral.

Heather Craig is the Archivist for The Basilica of Saint Mary, and encourages anyone with similar “small treasures” related to our history to contact her.
The 2022 Landmark Spark

Fund-A-Need

Each year, our Fund-A-Need initiative raises the necessary funds to accomplish one vital preservation or restoration project. Proceeds raised for the 2022 Fund-A-Need will help replace campus lampposts and improve exterior lighting surrounding our Landmark. An “old meets new” design will introduce LED efficiency while preserving the architecture to bring a renewed sense of optimism and safety to our community.

It is not too late to have an impact! Please consider making a gift at thebasicalandmark.org/FAN.

A special thank you to all those who have already supported this year’s Fund-A-Need project.
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