

Parish People: Early Parish Organizations

This is part 7 of a 12 part series about our parish history which we are running in the bulletin to celebrate our 50th anniversary year. Parts 1 through 4 focused on early parish construction. Parts 5 thru 8 will focus on parish people. This article covers parish organizations.

WOMENS GROUPS

Women traditionally have been very active in church life and our female founders were no exception. The first women's group of St. Joseph the Worker was the Altar Society. They kept excellent records and minutes in the early years. Vera Sena was the first Altar Society president. Serving with her were Vice-Pres. Emily McNaughton, Secretary Evelyn Stokes and Treasurer Mary Lepore. At some point the Altar Society became the Women's Guild. We see the name "Women's Guild" or "Ladies Guild" first mentioned in bulletins dated 1977. In more recent years the women's organization was revamped and is now called the WOW's (Women of the Worker). Here are some very early photos of the Altar Society from 1966:



Here is their **Summary of Years Activities for Sept. 1966 to 1967:**

Welcomed new pastor Father James Fogarty; Pantry goods for sisters, Spreads bought and donated for beds at sisters convent; Sick committee sends out sympathy and get well cards; Bake sales every second Sunday of each month; Halloween dance and Valentine dance held; Rummage sale; Gold Stars* and Betty Crocker coupons help purchase silverware, trees for nativity donated by society; cleaning of church, \$10 sent to Intermountain Indian school; Christmas basket for sisters; Material for Altar Amisce bought and donated by society, President becomes ill. Vice Pres stands in until May election; Gold strike stamps* being saved to buy a nice gift to raffle; Mass for parish; \$25 for a needy family whose father died; Breakfast served to first communicants; May elections, society disbands for 3 summer months.

SENIORS GROUPS

The earliest mention we have found of a special event dedicated for Seniors is in 1981. In this year there was a Seniors Christmas Dinner for parishioners who were age 55+. The dinners were prepared by the women of the parish. These dinners were an annual tradition for many years.

The first official parish organization for seniors that we are aware of was started in 1996 by John and Libby Martinez. It was called the Seniors Companion Club and sometimes Golden Companions. This group met occasionally for a potluck luncheon, wine and BINGO. John & Libby retired and the seniors have been headed up by Gerard & Pauline Collet since 2009. We are sad to report that Libby died in January 2014.



*Gold Star coupons (which came in cigarette packs) and Gold Strike stamps were like S&H Green stamps. They were very popular in the 60's and were collected and redeemed for gifts and premiums.

THE CONFRATERNITY

One of the earliest groups of the parish was called the St. Joseph the Worker Confraternity. Fortunately for us they kept excellent minutes and did a good job of preserving them for us. They give us some insight into what our founders were up to.

Here are some excerpts from their minutes:

- The Confraternity is the official “organization” of St. Joseph the Worker Church. Our Confraternity seeks to bring about the reality of a parish organized rather than that of a small group with limited membership. Through the framework of the Confraternity ALL the worthwhile activities-Spiritual, Material, Social and Educational –are intensified and more widely extended through communication, coordination and cooperation. The word “Confraternity” means a religious brotherhood or group of people working together in a spirit of Christian unity and charity. As a member of St. Joseph the Worker Church you have an obligation to participate actively in this community of the faithful. You are not being asked to join just another Church organization but rather to participate more fully in the ORGANIZATION to which you already belong– THE CONFRATERITY of ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER CHURCH.
- The Purpose of this organization shall be to promote the Spiritual, Material, Social and Educational welfare of all members of St. Joseph the Worker Church.
- Membership: ALL members of St. Joseph the Worker Church are considered to be members of this Confraternity and are expected to support its activities.
- Divisions:
 - TEACHERS– To assist with Catechetical programs
 - HELPERS– To prepare lists of Ushers and Church Cleaners
 - FISHERS– To carry on the work of the Legion of Mary– Home visits to sick and needy families, annual mananitas celebrations, Sanctuary.
 - WAYS & MEANS- To promote activities and programs for the purpose of raising funds for the Church and the Confraternity.
 - PARENT EDUCATORS– To assist with Parents Night program– Children’s Christmas party-provide transportation to classes.
 - YOUTH-CYO– To assist with the CYO Program
 - PUBLICITY– Report to Catholic paper- announcements, posters
 - CHOIR– Organists-singing practice-membership
- The first meeting of the Confraternity was held Oct. 18, 1967, Father James Fogarty was in charge. The following people were elected to office: President –Leo Valenzuela; Vice Pres. Onnie Lopez;
Sec.– DeMerce Trujillo; Treasurers– Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Bianchi; Chairman Fishers: Mr. & Mrs. Meliton Sanchez; Parent Educators: Mrs. Pete Armijo.
- The types of activities that the group organized: Coffee Service and Bake Sales, Christmas Programs, Fall Festival, Dances, Dinners, Parent Night, Scheduling Ushers.

A FEW INTERESTING QUOTES

January 2, 1968- “Father Fogarty talked about the Christmas program and he said it was very nice and he said we need more things like this going on so we could help each other and be kind, and not to argue like we have been doing all the time.”

May 7, 1968- “When you are appointed to a job you’re appointed, not anointed.”

June 3, 1970- “Men from St. Vincent parish and Father Carney were present to give us helpful hints on raising more money for our carnival.” Here are some of the many suggestions they listed:

- “Make the people do all the work and leave Father out of it.”
- “One of the most important parts of the carnival is that it creates brotherhood.”

At some point the Confraternity ended and presumably was replaced with a Parish Council. Parish Councils became popular after they were promoted in Vatican II and were meant to involve lay people in parish decision making. Our records show that a Parish Council was first chartered at St. Joseph the Worker in December 1978. The parish has had a number of Parish Councils throughout the years. Some were very active and kept meticulous minutes. Other councils were not so diligent about this. We have preserved several years of Parish Council minutes in our archives.

MENS GROUPS

From the earliest days of the parish there was a Men's Club. Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate any photos or minutes from their meetings. We did find several newspaper articles which mention them. Some are pictured here.

The Knight's of Columbus started a charter here on May 8, 1982 and for many years they were the primary way for a man to be active in the parish. In 2005 Father Carley established a new Men's group open to all men. This group is quite active, has accomplished a great deal *and* they actually take pretty decent minutes!



On the right: Men's Club News Articles from 1965

YOUTH GROUPS

In the early days of the parish, the youth were organized under the Youth Ministry Group (YMG), headed by Marge Perry. This was a very popular and successful group. At one point they had 35 boys and girls active in the group.

The adult leaders were required to go to training at the Newman Center in Ogden at Weber State. As the kids got older, they became assistants. One of the kids was Jim Burchett.

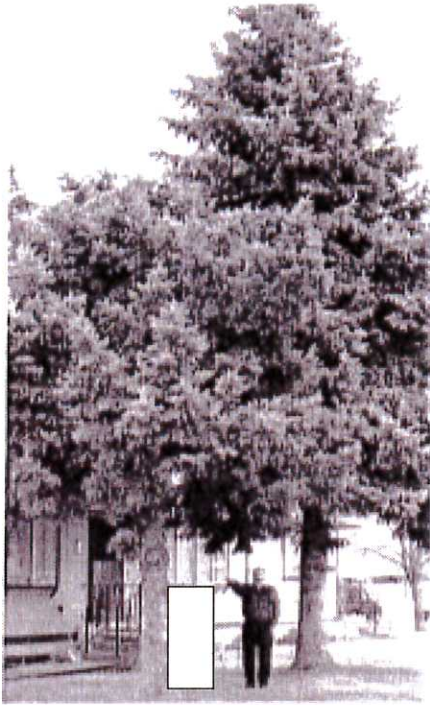
A very popular activity for the youth was a retreat called "Search". These involved Bible studies and workshops. Youth from all over the state would attend, and great friendships were made. On the last day of the retreat, parents would join their children. There were lots of hugs and happy tears at these parent & child reunions.

A Youth Mass was held every third Sunday of the month at Sacred Heart Church. Teens from all over the valley would attend. Another major project the youth were involved in was landscaping around the rectory. See next page for some photos.



The West Jordan Actioneers was a very early group of parish children. The news story associated with the clipping above tells of a gala variety show which was held to celebrate Father Sullivan's birthday & ordination anniversary. The entertainment included a "Goofus dance", a Hawaiian dance and Irish jig, recitations, a baton routine and a pantomime by the "American Beatles"— Victor Lopez, Donald Dominguez and Louis Lopez (Jr). Louis is the young man sitting in the middle of the picture.

The trees in front of the old rectory...



Above: Jim Burchett stands in front of the rectory before it was demolished. He planted these trees when he was still a youth in the parish youth group— over 30 years ago! The trees were as high as the white box when he planted them.

Right: These series of 3 photos show the trees being taken down in the demolition of December 2009.

